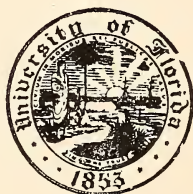


# THE NEEDLE'S EYE

ARTHUR TRAIN

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BY ARTHUR TRAIN

NOVELS

THE NEEDLE'S EYE  
HIS CHILDREN'S CHILDREN  
THE GOLDFISH  
THE EARTHQUAKE  
AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING  
THE WORLD AND THOMAS KELLY  
THE HERMIT OF TURKEY HOLLOW  
THE ADVENTURES OF ARTEMAS QUIBBLE  
"C. Q."—IN THE WIRELESS HOUSE  
THE BUTLER'S STORY

STORIES

TUT, TUT! MR. TUTT  
BY ADVICE OF COUNSEL  
TUTT AND MR. TUTT  
TRUE STORIES OF CRIME  
McALLISTER AND HIS DOUBLE  
MORTMAIN

ESSAYS

THE PRISONER AT THE BAR  
COURTS, CRIMINALS, AND THE CAMORRA

**THE NEEDLE'S EYE**



# THE NEEDLE'S EYE

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BY  
ARTHUR TRAIN



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NEW YORK  
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1924

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TO  
THE HAPPY MEMORY OF  
ETHEL KISSAM TRAIN  
WHO HELPED TO PLAN  
AND TO WRITE THIS BOOK

H. B. Rollins

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THE NEEDLE'S EYE





BOOK I  
MONEY

*"And when He was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to Him, and asked Him, 'Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?' . . .*

*"Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, 'One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.'*

*"And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions."*

*—St. Mark, 10.*

*"It does not follow that all men are honest because they are poor; and I have known some who were friendly and generous, although they had plenty of money. There are some great landlords who do not grind down their tenants; there are actually bishops who are not hypocrites; there are liberal men even among the Whigs, and the Radicals are not all Aristocrats at heart."*

*—"The Newcomes."*

## CHAPTER I

### GRAHAM & CO.

SILENTLY as spins the earth around the sun, so spins the world of Wall Street about the banking house of Graham & Co. Through its brazen doors one steps directly from the clatter and crash of Broadway into a region of supernal calm. As in a vacuum one stands behind its plate-glass windows and watches the soundless crowds go hurrying by like figures on the mirror of a camera obscura. The repose and dignity of the gods are here.

A hush pervades it, as if the place itself stood in awe of its own consequence. The footsteps of the grave attendant who asks your business die in the thick nap of the hand-woven Persian carpet. The clerks turn their pages with restraint. Chairs revolve—are not pushed back. Solid glass partitions reaching to the ceilings and clouded to obscure the vision assure the partners against disturbance from one another. There are no loose papers in Graham & Co. Files are called for and, having served their purposes, are at once removed. A financial struggle leaves no flotsam. *Spurlos Versenkt.* The clerks and employees communicate in sign language. The telephones ring only in the next room. The partners are perennially “in conference” or “in Europe.” You cannot get an appointment, no matter how far

ahead. Each member has his personal secretary, his messenger, his stenographer, who slip in and out so unobtrusively as hardly to be noticeable, and whose subdued voices intensify the contrast between the soundless world without and the silence that clamors within.

Here lurks the ghost of history. Here dynasties have been underwritten, republican revolutionaries "grub-staked," the tottering walls of empire shored up, royal expectations discounted, loans made upon crown jewels, grand ducal estates reorganized, imperial ambitions rebuked. Here have sat, hat in hand, present ambassadors, future presidents, foreign premiers, Mexican generals, Arctic explorers, adventurers and prospectors, black potentates from Zanzibar and colored statesmen from Haiti, reckless younger sons of titled families, naughty princelings, and little old ladies with gray curls and five hundred dollars to invest in something absolutely safe.

Here a handful of men sitting about a table have uttered the single word that set a thousand axes swinging in the northern wilderness—the rumble of dynamite, the hum of the saw, and the shriek of the whistle echoing among the hills; their mere "yes" has retained many a foreign cabinet in power, held more than one monarch on his shaking throne; their "no" has drawn the fires and stilled the wheels that kept a hundred thousand unskilled men at work and their families in comfort.

The shadow of destiny hovers here. For Graham & Co. control that which alone makes material progress possible—accumulated wealth: and since out of integrity they have evolved "credit," they possess a mysterious and magic power. They not only have credit but, in a sense, they can create credit and breathe it into others so that these too have financial life. A shrug of

their shoulders and a lift of their eyebrows go far toward throwing a man into bankruptcy. They can put a stock up or send it down at will. They can ruin an enterprise, or, if already ruined, can make it a success. If they look askance at a projected governmental loan the Treasury Department invites a member of the firm to come to Washington. If after full discussion he disapproves of it, the loan probably is heard of no more. They have their private sources of information from every part of the world; their "intelligence" is a thousand per cent more complete and reliable than that of the government.

They have their private telegraph system and their own leased cables. Within the fortress which they call "the office" are deep sunk dungeons, a dining-room, a smoking lounge, a library, and half a dozen "board rooms" done in the manner of the early Renaissance, to all of which swift elevators plunge silently up and down on smoothly oiled air-cushioned shafts. It has been said that Graham & Co. is complete except for a private cemetery. But it has vaults. Whom the gods love die young.

Employees never leave Graham & Co. They receive the same wages as those who work in similar establishments, but at Christmas they get a bonus of a hundred per cent or more. No one knows how to land a "job" there. No one could tell you. All the "references," certificates of character, letters of recommendation in the world would not get you inside the employees' entrance.

A shrewd "personnel" agent spends his time studying the staffs of country banks and trust companies—the bright young fellows who are coming out of Cornell, Brown, Leland Stanford, and Ann Arbor. The young

men who feed the staff of Graham & Co. are sound in wind and limb, of good repute in their home towns, conservative, clear-eyed, and thin-lipped. From advising farmer Higgins of Aroostook as to the purchase of a hundred dollar "baby" bond, they step into the counsels of Lloyd George and Poincaré.

The partners in Graham & Co. are too rich to care for money, which has ceased to be an object with them except in so far as the amount of profit indicates the vitality of an enterprise. Their reward lies less in the gain from their underwritings than in being members of that famous firm. Their attitude upon business problems is one of intellectual detachment. They have no hostility to "labor." They have no penchant for rich people. They play no favorites. They have no animosities or theories. They are "buyers and sellers of money." They have no illusions, although they may believe that "hope is better than history." They may see visions, but they dream no dreams.

The pink marble of the bank's façade glows in the beams of the setting sun or shines like pale gold under the deflected light of the evening lamps but it has no warmth, the thin red veins in the marble hold no blood, and the time-lock that ticks beneath the glass case holding the automatic riflès of its vaults is not a pulsating heart but a trifling detail in a machine that can be as inexorable as a car of Juggernaut and is almost as complicated as the wing of a beetle. A heavily built man with watchful eyes stands ceaselessly outside its doors.



## CHAPTER II

### "FOR EXPERIENCED CLIMBERS ONLY"

TWELVE-YEAR-OLD John Graham stood on the lawn outside the breakfast porch listening to the "Spouting Horn" booming on Frigate Head. It never boomed except just after a storm; the storm at last was over; and Johnnie, imprisoned in the house for five days, was free again.

With a yell of joy he dashed across the meadow and climbed up the head until he could look down upon the geysers of spray that occasionally spurted into the air out of the strange tunnel beneath. Forty feet below the sea sucked at the rocks, then, gathering itself together, surged forward with an upward heave and rushed into a narrow crevice. Beneath his feet unseen caverns mysteriously rumbled; the cliff suddenly "blew" like a gigantic whale, and the white water fell crashing all about him.

Hurrah! He wiped the salt from his cheeks and turned back toward the low, rambling stone house to which the Grahams year by year had reluctantly added. Half a mile behind it rose the gray overhanging precipice of Newport Mountain, its base fringed with forest. In the other direction the cobalt ocean strewn with coils of foam threw breaker after breaker against the cliff.

He had stolen a march on his brother and sisters and had had his breakfast early. The family were leaving for the city next day, but this last morning was his. Should he spend it on the shore or in the woods? He hesitated, looking from one to the other. Then he decided for the forest, and, whistling for his Cairn terrier,

he walked down to the main road, crossed the field, and entered the woods.

It was a blue October day, quite breathless, and he shuffled ankle-deep through red and russet leaves. Squirrels scolded at him above the path, partridges thundered away out of near-by spruces, and once a fox shot from a patch of scrub across a meadow—an undulating streak of yellow-white.

In his delight he paid little attention to his whereabouts, and did not perceive that he was climbing, until unexpectedly he found himself above the tree-tops. Beyond, the footpath wound along the cliff, rising gradually, but safe enough apparently, toward a lookout. Out on the horizon's edge he could see the white flash of a sail; nearer and below him, the creaming line of the rocks and the scarlet scar of the swamp maples in the clearing through which wound the thin sky-blue line of a brook.

These things so distracted him that he failed to notice both that the Cairn had disappeared in pursuit of a squirrel and that a sign affixed to a near-by tree warned that the path was precipitous. In search of an even better view he climbed on and upward until he reached the lookout, and, having rested there for a moment, started again.

Presently the path narrowed to a mere string-course of jutting ledge barely wide enough for a foothold. He managed to creep along it a short distance by aid of the iron brackets fastened at intervals to the rock. Then to his horror he saw that further along the ledge entirely disappeared. Only iron stanchions in the cliff's face continued the ascent—around an overhanging prow of granite.

Above, the cliff rose sheer to the zenith; down below,

six hundred feet, he could see between his feet a swaying mass of foliage. Clinging frenziedly to the handholds, he gazed back whence he had come. He could not go on; he could never in the world release his hold and crawl back. He must hang there until he fell! A paralysis seemed to be attacking his limbs. A minute or two longer and he must let go! It would be all over!

"Hang on! It's all right."

He clung there frantically. Around the ledge appeared a small brown hand, followed by a small brown freckled face! A girl! A very small girl! Nonchalantly transferring her grasp to the irons, she swung herself up and alongside him. She was carrying the dog.

"It's all right!" she panted. "I've done it often. Once you get around that rock——"

"I can't," he answered hoarsely. "My head's all buzzy!"

"But you must! You can't go back! You've got to go on!" she insisted. "I guess you can do it alone if I can do it with a dog!" she added scornfully.

The taunt was what he needed. He couldn't funk it before a ten-year-old kid with her hair in a braid!

Inch by inch, handhold by handhold, he crept along the shelf, and then, expecting each instant to plunge headlong into the tree-tops, pulled himself up over the jutting rock above and threw himself upon its top. "The Precipice Path!" The path Mumsey had forbidden him to climb because of his weak lungs and tendency to vertigo! How fragrant and warm the air, as he lay there gasping, incredulous of his own safety! Glorious to look down on the autumn woods, drenched with golden haze, the running whitecaps, the sparkling azure "Bowl" set like a bauble on the mountain's shoulder! To feel the burning sun on his reeking back.

Side by side they lay upon their stomachs peering down upon the swimming abyss of color below them, while the Cairn woofed at sundry suspicious holes.

"You don't deserve to have a dog!" she declared hotly.

"I didn't mean to leave him," he protested. "I didn't know he couldn't follow."

"Didn't you see the sign 'For experienced climbers only'?"

He shook his head.

"You must be blind then! What's his name?"

He mumbled awkwardly.

"Johnny—what?"

"'Johnny the Dog.'"

She burst out laughing.

"What a funny name! Why did you call him that?"

"Just so as to tell him from me. You see his—er—baptismal name was John, and somebody was always asking where Johnny was, and people wouldn't know which one of us they meant. So I named him 'Johnny the Dog'!"

"Did you change your name too?"

"Yes—to 'Johnny Myself.'"

"'Johnny Myself' and 'Johnny the Dog,'" she repeated. "What a good idea! He's a wonderful dog! The nicest dog I ever saw, I think." She looked at the Cairn admiringly.

They loafed there for an hour, talking of pirates and such things; then they reluctantly descended by the regular path along the sloping ridge. At the foot they stopped. He had found her quite delightful—fascinating, in fact—a little opinionated, but original and full of "go." He would have liked to ask her name, but shyness and the superiority of years prevented the open

acknowledgment of his debt. They did not even shake hands. He stood still stiffly, whistling for the Cairn.

"Well, so long!" he said.

"So long!" she answered, looking after them rather wistfully. "Good-by, Johnny—Myself."

For years afterward that unexpected terror haunted his dreams. So did the elfin brown face with its intense provocative eyes peering around the ledge.

## CHAPTER III

### "JOHNNY MYSELF"

JOHN GRAHAM was still soundly asleep in Holworthy 12 at nearly eleven o'clock on the morning after his senior class day. There was no need for him to get up, as his education was now complete save for the receiving of his A. B. degree with the rest of the class of 1914 at the hands of the president on Commencement Day, a ceremony which would not occur until the following week. Outside the threshold, next an uncleaned pair of brown shoes and a pint bottle of milk, lay the morning paper.

The room in which John Graham slept was small, containing only a warped bureau of problematic age, a chair, and a single bed. The door into the outer study was shut. On the bureau in front of a leather case containing family photographs ticked a cheap alarm clock. Through the half-open window came the discordant shriek and rattle of electric cars. The thin sunlight penetrating the dusty shrubbery illuminated the boy's face as he lay half upon his back with one arm extended, the shirt of his faded blue pajamas unbuttoned at the neck, his black hair tousled, his long lashes making shadowy half-circles on his slightly flushed cheeks. As the minute hand of the alarm clock approached the hour the sleeper sighed and a smile stole across his lips. Up to that moment in his brief lifetime of twenty years, John Graham had been happy. Then the alarm clock went off!

The boy arose, stretched, smothered the clock in the bedclothes, where it continued to cluck indignantly,



slipped on a shabby wrapper, and, retrieving his slippers from beneath the bed, opened the study door. The fat old “goody” who was in there cleaning up gave him a reproving glance and hobbled out. The bottle of milk now stood on the table in the middle of the room, and without looking for a tumbler he pried off the pasteboard top and drank half of it with relish. A rumpled package of cheap cigarettes lay on the mantel. He lighted one, went to the window and looked out.

The Yard was bathed in sunlight, the red lacquer of “Hollis” and “Stoughton” glinting through the tender green of the newly planted elms, but above white “University” an ominous line was drifting across the zenith. Already as he stood there the sunlight lost its brilliance and grew pale. The strident color of the old brick buildings faded; their shadows melted away. He began to feel unaccountably depressed. He had been so carefree the day before—during all the four preceding years. What was coming? He had hardly ever given a thought to the future.

He had been rather delicate as a child and had spent most of his boyhood at small open-air schools. At fourteen he had been ordered West in the care of a young physician, Winthrop Emerson, who had recently graduated from the Medical School, and who had thereafter acted as both his companion and his tutor, and had prepared him for college. Two years later John had entered Harvard at the unusually early age of sixteen, and, owing to his lack of association with other boys, young for that age.

His life at Harvard had not added widely to his acquaintance or much to his worldly knowledge. As a freshman, coming to Cambridge with practically no friends, he had at first found himself lonely, but rather

to his surprise he had been taken into a small and exclusive "final" club early in his sophomore year and almost immediately thereafter into most of the others. Incidentally he had continued to see a great deal of Emerson, who had found a position in the histological department.

He knew, of course, that he was the son of a very rich man, but it did not occur to him that his father's wealth played any greater part in his social relations than it did in his own domestic economy. His allowance was liberal but not extravagant and when it proved insufficient to buy what he wanted he went without. He wore his clothes until they were used up and then bought others. The room in which he stood did not give much evidence of luxury. The furniture, of which there was little, was decrepit, the rug stained with several generations of Cambridge mud. A large and very soiled Teddy Bear was suspended by its abdomen from the gas jet in the middle of the ceiling.

Having finished the cigarette, John put on a sleeveless undershirt and a pair of running-drawers, drank what remained of the milk since it was too late for breakfast, and was about to fetch in his shoes when he was interrupted by a knock on the study door, which, opening, disclosed Mr. Morris Katz, a college institution, otherwise known as "Poco."

The old-clothes dealer's sallow face was distended in a placating grin under his low-crowned derby hat.

"Vell, Mr. Graham!" said he, stepping into the room. "I seen how you graduated in the paper this morning, already! So I says to myself, maybe if he don't stay next year he should like to get rid of something. How about that old brown with the white stripes?"

John had forgotten all about the old brown, but he

went to the closet and haled it forth, together with a pair of dirty white tennis trousers and a decrepit ulster.

Mr. Katz examined the latter and shook his head dolorously.

"Id ain't vort more dan fifty cents, but I give you seventy-five!" he said.

John's sense of commercial fair dealing was outraged.

"I paid seventy dollars for that suit and you know it, Morris!" he answered, with all the facial indignation possible to one tying a shoe-lace. "It's worth seven or eight dollars at the very least!"

"Seven or eight dollars! Seven or eight dollars!" chattered Morris. "You should go into the clothes business yourself! Look at it! A feller would get the pneumonia in that suit. You're crazy with your seven or eight dollars! I give you a dollar!"

"No!" answered John Graham, bending over his other shoe. "If that suit is worth anything it's worth five dollars at the very least. Tell you what I'll do. I'll give it to you for five dollars and throw in the tennis trousers!"

Morris Katz leaned against the mantelpiece, acute illness patent in every feature.

"I should worry why you should be rich!" he groaned. "What good to anybody are them pants vit a hole burned right through them? Send them over to the hospital for bandages—I don't vant them!"

"All right!" said John. "You don't have to buy them."

Morris reached the door and opened it with the apparent intention of departing forever. But as John made no effort to delay his exit, he hesitated on the threshold as if struck by an unexpected and illuminating afterthought.

"Put in the ulster and I'll make it five dollars!"

"Good-by, Morris!" said John.

This insult had an extraordinary effect upon Mr. Katz. He re-entered the room and stood with a grieved air opposite the table.

"After all these years you should speak to me that way!" he sighed. "I gif you six dollars for the lot—vit dat old ulster."

"Ten—and they're yours."

"Seven!"

"No!"

"Himmel!" ejaculated Morris. "I should have you partners vit me! I gif you eight! Not one cent more!"

"Take 'em!" said John, slipping on his wrapper, and Morris, uttering incoherent expressions of bereavement, piled the garments together and with manifest reluctance counted out upon the table eight dirty one-dollar bills. John put them in his pocket.

"I should worry!" grumbled Morris. "Vell, good day, Mr. Graham! I should have your *unverschämtheit*!"

Still in his wrapper, John lighted another cigarette and stepped to the window. There certainly was going to be a storm. The firmament had turned black with wisps of whitish cloud smoking like dirty fleece along the under side. Somewhere out by Arlington a cannon-ball tumbled on the wooden flooring of the sky and rumbled across the heavens toward South Boston; and just overhead somebody was tearing up long strips of canvas. A scattering of raindrops came pelting down; and the wind, eddying through the room, swung to the door of his bedroom with a bang and rattled the newspaper which the "goody" had brought in and placed on the table along with the milk. He leaned over and glanced at it before going on with his dressing.

A drawing of himself, adapted from a photograph but unblushingly altered to suit the artist's fancy, stared at him life-size from the middle of the sheet. Under the picture was printed:

*John Graham,  
eldest son of one of the richest men in the world,  
and greatest matrimonial catch in the United States*

Across the top of the page in two-inch type ran the words:

# MULTI-MILLIONAIRE BIG FIGURE AT CLASS DAY

Heir to \$100,000,000 Popular with Classmates  
Has Looks, Brains, and Charm; a Good Spender, but No Snob

Every drop of blood in his body rushed to his cheeks. With a feeling of actual nausea he leaned against the mantelpiece, as waves of disgust, anger, and humiliation engulfed him.

Nevertheless, he could not keep from reading what had been said about him:

Don't you envy this young man? John Graham, who graduates from Harvard next Commencement Day, will some day be one of the richest men in the world. He will probably inherit nearly a hundred millions.

Do you know what that means? If converted into gold it would weigh two hundred and fifty tons, and two hundred and fifty horses would be required to transport it from the Graham offices to the Sub-Treasury. If silver, or dollar greenbacks, it would take a man fifteen years working eight hours a day to count it.

John can have what he wants any time he wants it! To him nothing is a luxury. If he wants to travel, his secretary orders his yacht, a special train, or at very least a private car. If he has a hunch to hunt tigers, the rajahs of India hustle to invite him to ride on their elephants. The Grahams have luxurious



mansions in New York, London, Paris, and Monte Carlo, summer palaces in Maine and the Adirondacks, ocean-going yachts, *trains de luxe*, boxes at the opera, seats reserved down in front at all the theatres.

Everything a Graham wears is fitted on a human dummy of exactly the same size and figure. Fast motors whisk them up and down town to business or to their social engagements. Private orchestras lull them to sleep and play during their meals, the viands of which they partake are prepared by a corps of expert chefs under the direction of an expert dietitian.

You might think John's handsome, curly young head would be turned. Not a bit of it! He is a regular fellow, and enjoys mixing with common folks when not hobnobbing with royalty. He is no snob, in spite of his millions.

With a curse he hurled the yellow sheet to the floor. It was a rotten, heartless, nasty defamation of all of them. His mother and father would be horrified at such cheap notoriety. "Human dummies," "private orchestras," "tigers and elephants!"

For a while he tried to get rid of his depression by sorting out his belongings and deciding which he would take home with him and which he would leave behind, but he was so hurt and raw that nothing could keep his mind off his grievance. He wanted to see nobody. However, as the afternoon wore on he realized that he must eat, and at half after six he sidled out through the groups of juniors lounging upon the steps, and with set features marched stiffly along the path that led to the gate between Massachusetts and Harvard. He entered the club with a brave show of nonchalance. But although his friends made a marked effort to be polite, the meal was constrained, the food tasted like sawdust, and after his coffee, John, having glanced over one of the college papers, sneaked back to his room.

Half-dismantled, it looked to him in the twilight like

a gigantic show-case in a museum containing but a single specimen—himself. The only friendly object in this heartless world in which he was so unfortunately conspicuous was Johnny the Bear—lineal successor of Johnny the Dog—swinging with outstretched paws. Winking back his tears, John grabbed it by the legs and laid his face against the woolly body. Then went into the bedroom and threw himself on the bed.

He was awakened an hour later by the slamming of the outer door and the turning on of the lights in the study.

"You there, Johnny?"

"Hello, Winty! Come on in!"

Emerson stood before the fireplace smoking a pipe. He was shorter and broader than John, with a wide forehead, reddish complexion and stubby nose, and he wore horn-rimmed spectacles with thick lenses that rather served to accentuate the humor in his small gray eyes.

"I got a bit bored with my laboratory work," he said; "thought I'd take a few minutes off. This hunting for bugs you've never met is discouraging business. You think you've found a new friend and then it turns out just to be old Uncle Typhoid or Aunty Streptococcus!"

John laughed politely.

"Have you seen this rotten thing?" he asked, indicating the newspaper.

Emerson adjusted his glasses and examined the front page without answering the question.

"Is that the Crown Prince or Christy Mathewson?" he inquired blandly.

"It's me—or supposed to be! Winty, I'm sick over it! I never want to show my face here again!"

Dr. Emerson stepped under the light.

"Well!" he said after a moment's further perusal. "They don't accuse you of murdering widows and orphans or robbing a church. It seems to me you've got off fairly easy."

"But it makes such an ass of me! And it's all a pack of lies. I'd like to wring the chap's neck that wrote it!"

Emerson tossed the paper back on the table.

"You mustn't mind this sort of thing. It's going to happen to you all your life. You're never going to be known for what you are, any more than your father is. The real man and the man as he's supposed to be are two totally different persons."

"Johnny Myself and Johnny the Bear!" John joked feebly.

"Exactly! You're not going to have any more time to bother with what the papers say about you than your father does. A quiet, hard-working chap like him is a general disappointment. There's no 'story' in a rich man being a good man, any more than there is in a politician being honest or a bank that doesn't fail. The public want an ogre, not a milk distributor. And they've got a kind of affection for the wealthy bounder who has a terrible time with wine, women, and song for four reels and then gets it in the neck in the fifth—a sort of fellow feeling! Offer them a decent, respectable millionaire and they think they're being cheated."

"But if there's no story in making a rich man out of anything except a rotter, why didn't they knock me instead of giving me this sickening boost?"

Emerson shook the ashes from his pipe and thrust it into his pocket. "They'll knock you fast enough and hard enough! Just wait! My dear Johnny, they'll draw and quarter you and scatter your entrails over the



length and breadth of the land for socialistic fertilizer. You're going to have a real jolly time of it, old son!”

The doctor laid his hand on the boy's heart.

“How's the old blood pump? Pounding any? Or missing on one cylinder?”

“Not a knock!”

“That's good!”

They stood for a moment grinning at one another. Then Emerson held out his hand.

“If I were you, Johnny,” he said, “I wouldn't bother myself too much at present over your money. There's an awful lot of time wasted playing ‘Money, money, who's got the money?’ If a fellow has it to start with he can forget about money-grubbing and concentrate his attention on things that are really worth while—science, art, health. But he's apt to become a total loss if he begins worrying over how the national income should be divided up.

“The socialist is all right, but, after all, his chief concern is with material things. A millionaire ought to be an idealist. What real difference does it make to your father whether he has a hundred million or a hundred billion? After the first few million, it's all a matter of bookkeeping. And what is his fortune compared to the wealth of the world or even of the United States? If, having got sick and tired of their everlasting yap, he divvied up with all the yappers, they'd get the blissful sum of just about one dollar apiece. Why, the total capital value of all the Graham properties is only one three-hundred-fiftieth part of the yearly income of the U. S. ! And the total wealth of the entire country is only equivalent to from three to five years of its own income. Wipe it out and back it comes again. Don't take a hundred million dollars too seriously, old chap! But

don't undervalue the opportunity it gives you, either! You've got your work cut out for you—and it's a man's job!"

He looked fixedly at Johnny the Bear.

"When you consider that the nearest fixed star is two hundred light years off, that thirty thousand bacteria can sit in comfort on the point of a pin, and that we haven't found out the cure for tuberculosis or infantile paralysis yet—good Lord, Johnny! Why all this gabble about money? And Heaven forbid you should ever become that most miserable of human creatures, a socialist millionaire—who is always having to explain to the millionaires why he is a socialist, and to the socialists why he is a millionaire!"

Doctor Emerson closed the door of Holworthy 12 behind him and descended the steps into the warm, humid night. The rain had stopped. He paused under the trees to relight his pipe. Through the window he could see Johnny the Bear swaying helplessly and Johnny Myself standing near by and staring at nothing in particular. Then the light was turned quickly off.

"Poor old John!" he muttered. "He's sure got a hard row to hoe!"

He went straight to the telegraph office. Drawing a blank toward him, he wrote:

THORNTON GRAHAM

47 PARK AVE., NEW YORK CITY

YOUR WIRE RECEIVED    TAKING IT HARD BUT IS GOING  
TO PULL THROUGH ALL RIGHT    HEALTH FINE

W. E.

"Send that collect," said he to the operator in the eye-shade.

Then, borrowing a match, he lighted his pipe and walked back to his room.

“That’s just the way of it,” he muttered to himself as he climbed the stairs. “A thousand years ago I’d have been trying to figure out how many angels could stand on the point of a needle—and now I’m trying to figure out exactly the same thing about bugs!”

## CHAPTER IV

### A "MALEFACTOR OF GREAT WEALTH"

JOHN GRAHAM, at twenty-seven the youngest or "cub" member of his father's banking firm, sat on a late afternoon in March of the year 1921 at his desk on the second floor of the Graham Building. Before him in a pool of yellow light, which poured down from a visor or nose projecting from a green glass sphere, lay a thick pile of correspondence. He had changed little in appearance since his graduation from Harvard, save that his army service had given hardness to the outline of his figure and maturity to his face, which just now wore an expression of exasperation. His eyes, extraordinarily blue, made two deep spots of color in the half-shadow.

He looked singularly young for responsibility; yet grave responsibility was his. The Mid-West Coal Company, of which he was the assistant vice-president in charge of sales and deliveries, was under contract to deliver one hundred thousand tons of bituminous in New York City and could not do so owing to the shortage in freight cars. The situation was complicated by a partial tie-up of the coal-carrying seaboard railroads and a general strike of bituminous-coal miners throughout the country, save those in the non-union mines of Utah and Colorado and West Virginia, where the Mid-West properties were located. Meanwhile one-tenth of the city's population shivered with cold and the other nine-tenths shivered for fear of it.

"Gosh, what a mess!" muttered John, shoving the pile of papers away from him. Then he smiled, suddenly impressed by the irrelevant fact that the green

globe with its queer snout looked like the head of an enormous and very dignified bird still in the fledgling state. Its reflected light made a sort of nimbus about the table, leaving the recesses of the room dim and remote. Then, as always, John Graham was a lonely figure.

The noises from without were as dim as the light inside. From an adjoining office came the sound of an occasional leaf being turned. The door was slightly ajar, and through it a crack of light stole across the parti-colored surface of a Savonnerie rug and rested on a Chinese cabinet. John looked at his watch. It was nearly six o'clock.

"Mr. Garvey!" he called.

At once the door opened and a man entered, his figure surrounded by a white aura of electricity. He stood there respectfully.

John arose.

"What do you think of that last operations report?" he asked.

He knew that Wallace Garvey, his father's secretary, always read everything.

"I should say that it was highly satisfactory," answered Mr. Garvey, coming a step nearer into the room. "The strike has given us a chance to put up prices without increasing wages. If we can keep on a few months at the present rate we can make up the deficit due to running the mines last year at a loss. The figures are encouraging." He spoke as authoritatively as was seemly in one to whom all things were possible but who was as yet technically only a subordinate. One had to impress and at the same time be properly deferential to these millionaires. Therefore he added suavely, "Don't you think so, sir?"

John did not reply. He was thinking how much Wallace Garvey looked like the pictures of Humpty Dumpty. Mr. Garvey did not press the question. He made instead a slight movement as if to step out of the way. He was the nearest thing to a courtier left in this land of democracy. His business was to be ubiquitous but invisible, or, if visible, to be audible only in agreement. He was an old young man, somewhat over-tailored, carrot-shaped, with soft, thick hands, a large, soft face with little jowls, and a massive oval head almost bald save for a curly brown fringe just above the ears. John did not like him.

As secretary to Thornton Graham Mr. Garvey received a salary of only fifteen thousand a year, but his influence was large and his opportunities, so long as he conducted himself with discretion, almost unlimited. He was unusually discreet—or perhaps it should be said that he was discreet usually. The crumbs of financial information which fell from his employer's table, but which honor should have forbidden him to use, netted him a considerable sum annually. Perhaps of all things he most craved social recognition, but he had never been invited by the Grahams to dine, and for this reason as well as for their wealth—although he shared their prosperity—he hated them in his soul.

"I suppose you read on the ticker what Ford thinks about the coal business?" inquired Mr. Garvey.

"No—I didn't happen to."

The secretary pulled a typewritten slip from his inner pocket.

Detroit, March 3. (Special.)—"The coal business is intolerable," said Henry Ford here to-day in a special interview. "Some people say it is intolerable because it is so badly organized. That is nonsense. It is intolerable because it is so well



organized. It is one of the best-organized businesses in the United States. The main business of the coal robbers is not to mine coal but to plunder the people. In the chief department of the coal business—the skinning, robbing, and buncoing department—the organization is elaborate and complete. The bankers finance everything—down even to the coal bootleggers—control everything and take everything. They control the railroads, and through the railroads control the coal industry. The coal situation will go from bad to worse until we break the hold that these bankers have upon it."

John, holding the slip under the green globe, read it with interest.

"Something to what he says," he remarked, "but I wish Henry would mention a few railroads on which Graham & Co. had enough grip to squeeze out a couple of hundred freight cars!"

Mr. Garvey gave a protesting grunt.

"I wonder why Ford always attacks the bankers? It's the wholesalers that ruin the coal business. Why, I know a big jobber over on Broadway who's made over 60 per cent on capital for the last two years."

"You mean Wagoner?"

Garvey nodded.

"He can get all the deliveries he wants right now!"

John stared at him, incredulous.

"How?"

"A year ago when empties were stuck up by hundreds along the return routes and you couldn't get any more cars than you can now, Wagoner, Birkhead & Co. gave a block of stock in their concern to one of the superintendents in the P. D. & O.—and got a thousand empties shoved right through to 'em the next Monday morning."

John whistled and glanced under his brows at Mr. Garvey.

"You don't say! Do you imagine *we* could put over anything like that?"

Mr. Garvey laughed uneasily.

"Of course Graham & Co. couldn't stoop to anything of that sort!"

John turned to the sheaf on his desk.

"Something's got to be done! I understand they're bootlegging soft coal in baskets over on the East Side to net \$20 a ton—coal that costs us \$2.94 at mine-head and that we're obliged to deliver at seaboard at \$4.89.

"Robbery!" quoth Mr. Garvey. "When everybody, including owner, operator, jobber, retailer, and the miner himself, could make good money even if bituminous was sold at \$4 a ton."

"And we're being blamed for it!" growled John. "The trouble is that the railroads need forty-eight thousand more cars than they've got—and have no money to buy 'em with! There's been a coal shortage every winter since I got back from France, when there's enough coal lying around just below the surface in West Virginia to last the country seven thousand years. There are plenty of men to mine it and railroads to carry it, but nobody can get it because there's either a coal strike, or a railroad strike, or some kind of a tangle."

He ran his fingers through the thick black hair just above his forehead.

"Do you know, Garvey, there's something all wrong about this coal business! I'm beginning to think that maybe people have a right to coal as long as there is any."

Mr. Garvey looked a trifle perturbed.

"And they'll get it, somehow!" concluded John, as he put on his coat. Then, bidding the secretary good night, he went down the short flight of marble steps that led



to the main floor. Lights still burned in four of the ten offices on the side occupied by the partners; but the banking department was deserted save for a couple of bookkeepers checking up the final balances for the day. The attendant on duty pressed a spring, opened the bronze doors and let him out; then closed and locked them again behind him.

"Good night, Ryan," said John to the Cerberus lurking in the shadow.

"Good night, sir," answered Ryan gruffly.

He watched the slender figure of the young man as it joined the cohorts of clerical bourgeoisie surging northward; then he descended the steps and followed close behind it, pondering the puzzling phenomenon of a millionaire who preferred the subway to a limousine.

The simple fact was that John liked anything that brought him in contact with people. Once he had taken the plunge into the fetid car he liked to hang there swinging in unison with the rest, or wedged between some bulky belly on the one side and a pair of knees on the other; liked to rub against them, to listen to their good-natured jokes and banter and have them call him "young feller."

He liked to speculate on what the homes of these people were like; whether they had wives or husbands or babies; what they had to eat and what they did for amusement; what they thought about. They were reasonably clean, and most of them, as it appeared to him, surprisingly well dressed. They all had a definite place in the economy of modern civilization—their jobs, such as they were, their love affairs, their intellectual cravings, their social ambitions. They even had a sort of permanency—not, to be sure, the permanency of owners of the soil, but a substitute—their lives had con-

tinuity, and each, in his or her own way, had also a kind of personal distinction—the distinction of doing a thing well and having others know it, or at any rate of doing it well enough to earn so many dollars a week. Each vanity bag, each glass earring said in so many words: “Look! See how well I’m doing!”

John sometimes wondered if this feeling of going somewhere or getting somewhere, even if you weren’t really going or getting anywhere, wasn’t the biggest part of the joy of living. The feeling of “belonging.” Of being able to call the next chap “young feller.” And of wanting to call him “young feller” or “old feller,” not because he was going to hand you some business, but because you and he were hanging together, swinging in unison from the same strap.

Outside his home John lived in comparative isolation. It almost seemed as if his old friends took pains to avoid him, as if they were chary lest he should think they wanted something from him. Moreover, wherever he went he felt himself to be the centre of curious scrutiny. He shrank from all this, particularly as he had very soon discovered that the scrutiny was not always amiable. Close at hand the world was friendly enough—almost offensively so—but at arm’s length its attitude seemed to be cold, if not hostile.

One reason for this, he discovered, was that there were, so to speak, Grahams and Grahams, each differing from the others in character, if not in glory. The world did not, perhaps could not, differentiate clearly between them. Thus, when one spoke of “The Grahams,” one did not refer merely to the partners in Graham & Co. or to the banking house, which was a distinct and separate entity of itself, but to the collective fortunes of the Graham family, and particularly of Levi and Shiras

Graham—the two octogenarian half-uncles of Thornton, the "malefactor"—whose accumulations amounted in all to another hundred millions or so, and who, since they were no longer engaged in adding to their wealth, devoted themselves entirely to the task of protecting it from unrighteous encroachment, lobbying against confiscatory legislation, devising ways and means to avoid income taxes, and, if possible, ultimately to chouse the state out of its death toll.

His father was too busy to see much of him at the office, and John usually took his luncheon by himself, having it brought in to his desk on a tray or slipping out to a stand-up counter for a baked apple and a cup of coffee. Afterward he might stroll across the park for a cigarette, and possibly take a look at the fish in the Aquarium.

He amused himself by comparing the various figures he knew in Wall Street to the shiny occupants of the tanks. There was one financier in particular who resembled the seal to the very life—smooth, glossy, slippery—with exactly the same snout. There was a bland, soft, sad fish with thick lips and a drooping mouth that strikingly resembled Great-uncle Levi, and another smaller one that sailed around after the first and looked as if it were going to burst into tears, that was exactly like his dyspeptic cousin Homer. And up on the second story, where the gallery ran around the building, there was a big, horny, prickly old fish with Chinese whiskers that rushed around stirring up everything and eating every little fish that got in its way—Great-uncle Shiras!

He preferred thus loitering around incognito among the proletariat to mingling with the bankers and their clients in the dining-room at the office. He was indeed rather

afraid they might discover how little he really knew of the influences that governed foreign exchange or the flow of gold, or the interest rates brought by money from day to day. It was all big business; and John felt so very small!

Sometimes he wondered if after all they knew much about it either. Whether the financial "laws" they discussed were in fact "laws" at all. He wondered if it was all as simple as that. Whether you could plot the curve of an industry's prosperity on a sheet of paper ten by twelve. And always as well there was, lurking in the background of his mind, the possibility that with all their fine qualities the men with whom he was associated were more or less turning their backs on something, "ducking" an unpleasant issue.

He had been in the foyer of the bank when Tom Burk, the international organizer, his face covered with bandages, had slipped past Ryan and demanded to see his father. John had been struck by the little man's determination and pertinacity—shocked at his appearance. He stated quietly that he, a law-abiding citizen, had been thrown off the train at Graham Station and beaten up by armed guards in the pay, as he alleged, of the Mid-West Coal Company. He had come to demand justice for himself, protection for his associates in their constitutional rights. He had been peaceable but rather insistent, and when, on finding that Thornton Graham was away, he seemed inclined to address the world at large upon the subject of his grievances, Ryan had led him out. Yet there had been something about him that John had liked.

For John was one of those people who never see a load of grain without thinking of the men who have planted and garnered it. He had always had dollars and never

had had people—so he was more interested in men than in money. This is not the way to be in Wall Street. He felt himself out of sympathy with it—unfitted to be a partner in Graham & Co. Perhaps in time he would be better fitted. Perhaps——

## CHAPTER V

### THE VORTEX SCHOOL

LECTURE ON PLUTOCRACY  
BY PROF. A. SCHIRMER  
*Now Going On*

A PYRAMIDAL sign—black letters on a white ground—standing cater-cornered on the sidewalk blocked John's way as he bore sideways to pass the crowd of young people in front of the open doorway. He had got out at Fourteenth Street and walked eastward, hardly noticing where he was.

"By George!" he thought involuntarily. "This must be the Vortex School."

He had read about it often, and while he was out of sympathy with what he understood to be generally taught there, he had disapproved of the performances of the Hush Committee and of much of the subsequent legislation passed ostensibly for the purpose of stamping out the spread of communistic doctrine, being privately of the opinion that this scare over "radicalism" was arrant nonsense. It seemed to him quite unlikely that the American workingman was going to stake his beefsteak once a day, his Ford, and his talking-machine on the philosophizing of a black-whiskered German "beer-hound" living in a London garret. This Vortex business was simply endowed parlor socialism. But now that he was there——



He pushed through the door and found himself in a narrow hall surging with others like those outside. On either hand was a large room, and in the one on the right, from which a strong smell of cabbage and of onions floated forth, people were eating at small bare tables of the "*art nouveau*" variety. The room on the left was a book-store, and the throng in the hall overflowed into it and gathered arguing about the tables. Everybody seemed to know everybody else, and there was much good-natured jostling and "kidding."

John was impressed by the fact that all these young people looked so much alike—had the same sort of features, the same clothes, the same alert, keen, peering expressions—in spite of the almost universal horn spectacles—the same pallid complexions, and were all approximately the same height—a little undersized. On one side two girls in red tams were discussing Picasso and Bakst with a thin man in a frazzled pointed beard and soft bow tie.

There was a pile of *The Revolutionary Age* at John's elbow, and he bought one, out of embarrassment, for three cents. Among the books for sale on the shelves he noticed "Reflections on Violence" by Sorel; "Fields, Factories and Workshops" by Kropotkin; "Our Revolution" by Trotsky; "The Class Struggle" by Karl Kautsky; bound volumes of "Mother Earth" and several works on anarchism. On another table were displayed: *The Marxian*; *The Proletarian*; *The Liberator*; *The Nation*; *The New Republic*; *Direct Action*; *Solidarity*; and a number in foreign languages.

There was also a large collection of works on socialism, art, poetry, irreligion, and sex—the latter preponderating. Indeed, there was a superabundance of sex literature of all kinds, from treatises on hygiene and anatomy

to works upon the institution of marriage and various proposed substitutes.

A bulletin board in the hallway announced lectures during the week on "Sex Hygiene," "Removing Foreign Accent," "Wealth and Income," "Breakers Ahead," "The Soviet Programme," and "The Drama of Protest." At the other end of the hall was a door bearing the sign "Lecture Going On."

In spite of the character of the literature on sale, none of these earnest young people looked particularly dangerous—nor did they look much like proletarians. They were not laborers. Future Lenins and Trotskys, perhaps, but men of books rather than of pick and shovel—talkers, not doers. As John watched them scuffling and giggling he speculated upon the real nature of their interest in this, probably their only social meeting-place, and it struck him that there was something rather pathetic in their obvious desire to improve their minds, in their thirst for knowledge of what was going on in the intellectual world, in their zest to sharpen their wits upon the cuttlefish bone of socialistic argument; yet at the same time he could not help feeling that there was also something slightly unwholesome in the atmosphere surrounding this so-called search for truth—something sordid, materialistic, even sensual in this fierce eagerness to strip the goddess of her garments and lay bare what was beneath, that made it somehow savor of a business transaction. While they were concerned about their minds they were obviously also much concerned about their bodies.

Some were intense, serious, hungry for knowledge; others liked the sensation of toying with subjects that elsewhere were frowned upon, the excitement of being "radical." But whatever they learned there they took



away with them, into their homes and workrooms, and not the least mischievous was the thought that because some one else had something which they had not that some one must be their enemy.

John paid ten cents and went into the lecture-hall. All young people again! Professor Schirmer, a pallid intellectual with a sweeping forelock of oily black hair, was apparently reaching his peroration and had his audience with him, for at the close of every period there was a burst of applause from the floor.

"This government isn't a democracy!" he shouted. "It may have been once, but it isn't now! It's become a plutocracy controlled by a handful of rich men. Do the Senators down in Washington represent you? No! They're just the hired agents of the oil men, the copper crowd, and the coal barons. Our Congressmen are all of them owned—bought and paid for! We are at the mercy of those who have got their clutches upon the country's great natural resources and exploit them for their own profit, while the farmer pays thirty cents a gallon for gasoline and the poor buy coal by the basket at the rate of thirty to thirty-five dollars a ton, if they can even get it at all!"

He paused, his lower jaw quivering.

"Name 'em!" called a woman's voice. "Name the robbers!"

The speaker wheeled to her.

"You want me to name these people? I'm not afraid to! I'll begin right at home—right here in New York! Where do the Grahams get all their money? No one knows how many millions or billions they have got. Why are the poor of this city freezing to-night for coal? Because the Grahams won't pay their miners a living wage! Because in this day of so-called enlightenment

the Grahams won't recognize the right of collective bargaining on the part of their employees. Why, they treat the human beings who work for them worse than cattle. Would any sensible farmer starve and abuse his livestock the way these feudal lords starve and maltreat the men who slave for them underground in the dark?"

John was furious. It was a malicious slander. Yet he made up his mind to restrain his anger until he saw how far the fellow would go.

"They own the State legislatures, the courts, and the judges. They nominate their own men and run the government. The miners are driven to the polls like sheep and if they don't vote as they're told they're thrown out. Cattle! You've all heard the story about how, after an explosion when a hundred miners were trapped down in the shaft and their friends wanted to get them out, the pit boss said: 'Damn the men—they don't cost anything. Save the mules!'"

He paused to allow the hisses to subside.

"Do you know that a free American citizen can't put his foot inside the twenty thousand acres owned by the Mid-West Coal Company out in Bitumen County, West Virginia, although the State highway runs through the property? They've got a stockade and searchlights. They've got it so fortified you can't get in—or out! Look at they way they beat up poor Tom Burk, the international organizer! They nearly killed him."

He shot his fist heavenward.

"I accuse the West Virginia operators not only of controlling the government of the State, but of maintaining a super-government within it by means of gun-men, which enables them to treat the workers like slaves, pay 'em what they like, and to refuse even to weigh the coal. How can a man feed his children or keep them from dis-

ease if he can't unite with his fellow-sufferers for the purpose of forcing his employers to pay him a living wage and to obey the law? Do you know that last year in one district the men got only eighty days' work and that the average earnings per man were less than five hundred dollars for the year? How can any family live on that?"

John got half-way to his feet. He knew that the statement was totally misleading. The Mid-West Coal Company had run two hundred and seventy-five days and the average earnings per man had been about seventeen hundred dollars. The reason the miners in the district referred to had only worked eighty days was because they were out on strike. The rest was equally perverted. But what was the use? The meeting was packed!

Across the aisle a girl in a caracul coat was following intently every word of the speaker.

"For a moment the mighty tide of unionism has been halted by a barrier of machine-guns and armed guards, but it will not be for long. Let them beware what will happen when the tide bursts through! They are in the saddle to-day, but only for to-day! They can hire and fire and beat up the poor fellow who tries to appeal for mercy for his starving wife and babies. They can control the supply of coal so that half of you will go to bed cold to-night, but to-morrow—the day of real democracy will break! For democracy will not exist—and none of us will be free—until the menace of these huge fortunes is swept away."

Professor Schirmer wiped his dripping forehead and began anew.

"They are the bane of America to-day! Take people like the McLanes. They're worse even than such brig-

ands as the Grahams. They have contaminated the whole country by washing their dirty linen in open court. Such people are worse than murderers. What chance in life have their children with such an inheritance? What was it that transformed the McLane affair from a private quarrel to a public scandal? Money! The fact that these two people couldn't settle with each other at the bank was what made their lives the common talk of boys and girls. No one envies them their riches; but who takes any more stock in this cant about the sense of responsibility riches are supposed to confer?"

"That's true, anyway!" thought John.

There was a roar of handclapping. Professor Schirmer shook his mane, bowed, and staggered backward as if overcome by his own eloquence. The lecture was over. Next instant the crowd was struggling toward the doors.

John remained in his seat. The speaker was either a liar or egregiously misinformed. He waited until an ecstatic group of young women had reluctantly faded from the platform, and then partially barred the professor's exit up the aisle.

"Excuse me!" he said. "You're all off about the Mid-West Coal Company!"

Professor Schirmer, who had been coming up the aisle with a vaguely ingratiating smile upon his lips, halted abruptly.

"What's that?" he asked suspiciously.

"I said you were wrong on your facts," repeated John.

Professor Schirmer tried to push by

"I'm sorry," he said, "I really can't talk to you now, I've got——"

All John's suppressed irritation leaped forth.

"I'm sorry, too! I gave you credit for at least wanting to be fair!"

The lecturer reddened.

"I haven't time to argue with you, sir! This isn't a debating society. I have my facts. I know what I'm talking about."

"No, you don't!" retorted John. "I can prove it to you in half an hour."

Professor Schirmer's mouth twitched.

"May I ask who you are?"

"John Graham."

For a moment the lecturer looked a little frightened; then he assumed full belligerence.

"Oh!" he exclaimed scornfully. "That explains it!"

"What do you mean by that?" demanded John angrily.

"Do you suppose anybody with a grain of sense would go to the officials of the Mid-West Coal Company for information about the coal business?"

"I do," answered John. "He'd at least give them a chance. Every accused is entitled by law to the benefit of a doubt."

The phrase curiously restored the other's confidence.

"I'm glad you regard yourselves as on trial!"

The muscles in John's jaws stiffened like his father's when angry.

"You're a communist, I suppose?"

"I'm a radical socialist."

"I guess we wouldn't get very far along those lines; but I'd like an opportunity to show you——"

"And I'd like nothing better!"

"If you'll come to-morrow morning—my office—ninety-nine Broadway——"

"I won't go to your office! You can come to mine."

"But I can't show you my books in your office," expostulated John.



"I can show you my evidence, though!" The lecturer started up the aisle, then glanced back over his shoulder. "Look here, Mr. Graham, have you ever been out to Bitumen?"

"No, but our officers——"

"Well, I have! Until you've at least walked over your properties there's not much use our talking. It would be waste time. Thanks very much for your offer. Later, perhaps——"

He pushed by, leaving John alone in the aisle. *Touché!* A Jewish boy in a sweater began putting out the lights. John walked to the door, raging at the other's ironical tone of superiority. He felt as if he'd been stepped on.

The girl in the caracul coat had also waited—evidently to speak to the lecturer, who had by this time escaped—and she now arose and followed John to the door, which he held open for her. By a trick of light her face was fully visible to him for the first time as she passed through.

"Thank you," she said with just the trace of a smile. Her face was pale ivory, save for a few little freckles on her small, straight nose, and her dark hair gave the impression of having been bobbed. As she stood looking at him the smile gave place to an expression of baffled recollection. John too had a pleasurable feeling of having seen her before somewhere.

"I'm afraid I prevented your speaking to Professor Schirmer," he said to explain his stare.

"It wasn't at all important!" she replied. Then, with a charming lift of her eyebrows: "I beg your pardon but—aren't you—Johnny Myself!"

He had not heard the nickname for over ten years—since the death of his old Cairn terrier at the senile age

of twelve. Now as her head moved toward him along the upright plane of the door, he saw in its place the cliff at Frigate Head, with a small brown face peeping round it—that of a little girl with braids, carrying Johnny the Dog.

“Of course!—and you’re the girl on the Precipice Path!”

“Only we weren’t introduced that time!” she laughed.

“Is Johnny the Dog still alive?”

He shook his head. “Dead ten years ago!”

“Poor Johnny the Dog!”

“I’ve so often thought of you and wondered who you were,” he went on. “This is the first time we’ve met in—let’s see, how long is it?”

“Fifteen years!”

“Well, now at last I’m rewarded! Who are you?”

Quite naturally they strolled together through the hall, past the restaurant, and out into the street.

“Aren’t you going to tell me?” he persisted as she did not speak.

She looked away. “I’m—ashamed—to tell you!”

“Please!” he begged.

“Let’s wait!”

“Wait! Do you suppose I’ll let you go now without finding out who you are, after all this time? Tell me! If you don’t”—he threatened.

“Very well, then!” she cried, lifting her chin defiantly, with a backward gesture of her arms. “You may as well know now—as later. I am Rhoda McLane!”

He could not prevent a start of surprise. Her story had filled the papers all over the country,—this girl who, called as a witness by her father against her mother, had refused to testify and been ordered to jail for contempt of court!

He realized the cruelty of his insistence.

"I'm *so* sorry!" he said. "I wouldn't have asked if—but after all, we're both in the same boat."

"What do you mean?"

"I'm one of the 'plunderbund'! I'm one of those terrible Grahams!"

"Not really!"

"I am!"

"How strange! I didn't know there was a son your age—a—John Graham."

"Yes! I'm Thornton Graham's son. I've a younger brother—a senior at Harvard."

"I know him; he's a classmate of my brother Ranny."

They were standing in front of a photographer's window, and the Cooper Hewitt light gave his face an odd tinge.

"You don't look like a Graham!" she declared, peering up at him mischievously.

"What does a Graham look like?"

"Oh—sinister!"

"Don't joke!" he scowled.

"I'm not joking!"

Suddenly her expression altered.

"You don't look sinister. But you ought to."

"You believe all that rot?"

"I believe what Professor Schirmer said. But it isn't your fault that you're a Graham any more than it is mine that I'm a McLane." She gave him an appealing glance—"Oh, please, *please* don't be cross. Let's be friends, unless you're afraid of me—Johnny Myself!"

"Why should I be? I've known you over fifteen years, haven't I? And I've always had the feeling that I'd known you long before that—somewhere else, perhaps——"



They walked slowly up Broadway to Madison Square and then up Fifth Avenue.

"I'm sorry you had to hear all that stuff this afternoon!" he said. "Of course we're bound to be misunderstood——"

She stopped abruptly on the sidewalk.

"No," she contradicted him. "We are not misunderstood. It's you who don't understand. Wealth really is a poison that in the end demoralizes or destroys everybody who has it."

"There is good money and bad money!" he corrected.

"There's no such thing as 'good money'!" she retorted. "It's not good for anything. It isn't good to buy even the cheapest happiness!"

"You're not happy?"

"Are you?"

He looked down at her.

"Not as happy as I'd like to be!" he said. "May I come to see you?" he asked diffidently.

"If you are willing to. As you said, we're in the same boat. The same wicked old fairy cursed us both."

"Well, perhaps we can beat her to it—together."

"Perhaps." She held out her hand. He took it in both of his.

"We shall!"

He watched her with a curious elation as she threaded her way among the pedestrians up the Avenue, then turned through Thirty-seventh Street toward his home.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE SHAME CHILD

RHODA McLANE walked swiftly up Fifth Avenue in the soft twilight. Festoons of pale orange rose and dipped and rose again ahead of her, dwindling into the pale blue background of sky. The sidewalks were damp, the air redolent of violets and earth, with a sharper impingement of petroleum. Sunset and electricity were fused into a cheating, alluring glow—a silken dress seen by lamplight. A few stars were visible, faintly as through a mist. Evening was stealing up the side streets and along the Avenue like a caress. Once she might have felt a thrill of romance, but to-night such beauty only intensified the irony of her existence.

The McLane house had cost two millions, and its contents another. Its owner had given architect and decorator *carte blanche* to do him something out of the ordinary, with the surprisingly incongruous result that he had found himself living in the cloisters of a Spanish monastery encased in the shell of a Pitti Palace. That in these ecclesiastical shades the acolytes should be cockney English servants in Prussian-blue liveries was no more disturbing than that the McLanes themselves should be there, sleeping in chapels with groined ceilings, changing their footgear while seated upon arch-episcopal thrones, and eating at an enormous refectory table under altar candles that cast dim religious shadows upon the *jambon mousse* and *canapé au jus*.

McLane had merely followed precedent. An original, if junior, member of the Pittsburgh steel group, he had

cut throats and sandbagged competition with the rest of them until he was able to sell out for thirty-five million guaranteed in five per cent bonds. He had had another wife—a husky young Venus who had arisen from the suds of a hand-laundry on Station Street—but she had got lost somehow in the early nineties. There were persons sufficiently indiscreet to whisper that, by the aid of her three millions, she had now become a Roman princess, a familiar figure at the Quirinal—a Torquilani! He did not begrudge it her. “Mattie” was always, as he had expressed it, a good old skate; but he wanted—in his new scheme of things—some real class. As many another man has done who had a no more potent social wedge than a steel billet, he ended by marrying on Broadway, the beautiful and vivacious young actress, Miss Victoria Mainwaring, *née* Susan P. Trotter, of Elizabeth, New Jersey.

He was good-natured, ignorant, full-blooded—an easy mark. What had caught him had been the ineradicable touch of breeding that she undoubtedly had. He was then a year or so over forty; she thirty-nine, and acknowledging twenty-seven; and she did for him what he never, by remotest possibility, could have done for himself. Mr. and Mrs. “Tex” McLane disappeared, and five years later Mr. and Mrs. J. Randolph McLane returned.

From among the New York expatriates crowding about the “*petits cheveux*” at Aix they annexed one of unquestioned social antecedents who guaranteed to “put the McLanes across” for twenty-five thousand a year. Mrs. Scott-Burland did her job as social promoter well. Soon, quite unconsciously, the better sort of people began to speak of “Randolph McLane—you remember him, don’t you? One of the steel crowd—a brother of

the Princess Torquilani, isn't he? His wife was that beautiful New England girl who ran away from home and went on the stage. Interesting people—the kind that know everybody everywhere, you know. They're building that big house up on Park, near Seventy-second. . . . Oh, yes, indeed! Millions!"

The "Corner Store" welcomed McLane; the "Colony" his wife. Everybody wanted to meet them, in order to be invited to dinner and "see the inside of the house."

For a while they played the game to the limit, and really enjoyed it. Tex, following the regular routine of American millionaires, began to collect pictures, posed as a music lover, engaged a fashionable organist to play to him while he was taking breakfast in bed, and, almost as a concession to form, paid the expenses of a chorus girl in a Riverside Drive apartment. Susan played bridge with a select group of fashionable women, and let herself go. It was during the earlier part of this successful period that Rhoda and Randolph Junior had been born.

In due course McLane had become obsessed with the "estate" idea. He bought two thousand acres of farm, forest, and sand in New Jersey and began turning them into a park. Like Louis XIV, he had his *Le Nôtre*, who slyly stimulated his mania, and greedily drew down two-and-a-half, five, and sometimes ten per cent on every square of limestone, each transplanted cedar, tapestry, and kitchen spigot. There was a house party attended by the leaders of fashion. They were on the crest of the wave of curiosity.

And then something happened. A crotchety old woman from Fifth Avenue was not given as good a seat at dinner as she thought she deserved, and returning home in a huff announced that in her opinion the Mc-

Lanes were second-class. Moreover, she wrote over to a friend who was spending the winter in Rome, asked about this Princess Torquilani, and discovered that she was not his sister at all, but McLane's divorced wife! The gossips began to get busy. The McLanes' second house-party was a flat failure.

Susan's unfailing instinct told her that they were done for. Fashion had squeezed what there was out of them and had no further use for the Pitti Palace or the footmen in Prussian blue. It began to be said that there was something wrong about the McLanes. The chorus-girl story got around. They separated.

Ranny was at boarding school, Rhoda preparing to come out. McLane added an apartment to the top of a skyscraper, went back to Broadway, and foolishly cut his wife's allowance to sixty thousand a year. She could not live on it in the Park Avenue house, but he now did everything the chorus girl suggested—when he was sober. Hal Traquair, with whom she danced in the afternoons at the Croyon, advised Susan to sue for divorce. She brought her action; McLane filed a counter-action naming the *gigolot* as co-respondent. For three months the details filled the front page of every New York paper. Finally it became so offensive that a committee of Tex's old friends went to him and urged him to call it off. He cried on their shoulders, babbling incoherently about the good old days in the Alleghanies, and "auld lang syne." Eventually he promised to do as they said—"pass it up." He would give her what she was asking, a hundred thousand a year and the Pitti Palace.

For a week nothing appeared in the papers about the McLane case. Then the lawyers got squabbling over their fees and the sewer overflowed again. Rhoda's friends had rallied loyally around her, although, of



course, their mothers—ladies like Mrs. Rufus Kayne and Mrs. Brice-Brewster—could not “have that McLane girl in the house.” Ranny—in the country at Groton—escaped the worst of it, an object of secret delectability to the young ladies at Prize Day. “*Do* show us! Which is Randolph McLane?” It was generally assumed that he must be a young devil—which made it all the easier for him to become one the following year at Harvard.

Strangely enough, her mother’s very indifference had proved Rhoda’s salvation. Charlotte Roskill, the young English governess employed by Mrs. McLane to take charge of Rhoda from the time she was five years old, was the highest type of Englishwoman, and under her tutelage the girl developed a character as fine as her own.

In spite of everything, Rhoda loved her father, her mother, and of course her brother, for she knew how much of kindness there was in all of them. But there had grown up in her an intense hatred for what made, as she supposed, such family tragedies possible. She was a college girl—had had two years at Vassar, where her classmates had been, for the most part, daughters of men who had made sacrifices to send them there. Ordinary people did not have catastrophes like that in her own life. Wealth was responsible for it all. She was a public character, pointed out whenever recognized. A byword! “Poor Rhoda McLane!”

Her own suffering made her keenly sensitive to the sufferings of others. Turning her back on the environment in which she had been born, the girl gave herself and what money she had to such causes as seemed at the moment most calculated to help the unfortunate. Without any adequate study she had become bitterly antagonistic to the established order of things, tracing to cap-



italism the wreck of her own life and all the other ills that humanity is heir to. So long as there was a sick baby who needed milk or an old woman without a home, why should people be allowed to spend money on frivolous pleasures? Recently her pity had been aroused by the posters appealing for funds to save from starvation the striking miners and their families in the tent colonies about Bitumen. Whatever the rights of the coal strike, it was wrong, unfair, un-American to starve the miners into submission.

The upper half-story of the Pitti Palace faded from orange to gray as she turned into Park Avenue and climbed the marble steps. The door was opened by one of the blue-liveried footmen, and Rhoda stepped into the dusk inside. On the refectory table lay a man's fedora hat with a bit of flamingo feather in the band.

She climbed the stairs rather wearily to the drawing-room, a huge room, fifty feet by seventy, lined with choir stalls of the sixteenth century and hung on three sides with tapestries. In the distant rectangle in front of the gigantic chimney-piece—a man and a woman were sitting.

It was the first time since the divorce case had been discontinued—without legal redress to either party—that her mother had received Traquair, to Rhoda's knowledge, in the house.

"Come in, dear!"

The girl's face flushed and her eyes kindled. Without reply she turned, crossed the dimly lighted hall, and stepped inside the bronze grille of the elevator. A moment later she stood in the arched, whitewashed chamber that served as her bedroom. She had determined loyally to stick by her mother, who had promised not to see Traquair again. Now that promise had been

broken, and in the breaking Rhoda felt the disruption of her own life. She was, she knew, at the crossroads.

There was a knock at the door and her mother entered. Mrs. McLane was still strikingly handsome at sixty-three.

"Rhoda!" she pleaded, "please don't be angry with me! It's not as you imagine! Something has happened that changes everything. Mr. Pepperill was here this afternoon and says your father is willing to let me divorce him. He is disposed to be liberal to all of us. Three millions to me, and a million apiece to you and Ranny."

Rhoda's courage failed her. Was everything to begin over again?

"Don't worry, dear!" continued her mother, reading her thoughts. "It will all be done in Paris without the least publicity. Six weeks from now I'll be free!"

"To marry again?"

Mrs. McLane strove to appear unconcerned.

"Perhaps."

"Oh, mother—how can you! A man less than half your age! Think of what people will say—think of Ranny and me!"

Mrs. McLane did not meet her eyes.

"You don't begrudge me a little happiness, do you, Rhoda?" she said. "You ought to be glad. I've certainly suffered enough from your father. Traquair——"

Rhoda was on her feet in a flash.

"Don't mention that man's name to me!" she cried.

Her mother seemed on the point of losing her composure.

"Don't be so violent, Rhoda! After all, plenty of women marry at my age! Why shouldn't I?"

Her voice rang harsh and flat against the whitewashed walls.

"I know well enough what you're thinking, Rhoda! That I'm a silly old woman and that Traquair's after my money. Well—I don't care! Do you hear? I don't care! I don't care about anything! I love you, Rhoda, and Ranny, too, but don't you suppose I know you both despise me? I'm no fool! I've smashed my life. I'm a sick woman, too. I've told nobody—not even Traquair. But I haven't very much longer to live, and I want a little happiness before I go out!"

"Mother! Don't!" expostulated the girl.

But Mrs. McLane's threadbare nerves could not rein in her running words.

"You mustn't think that mere discrepancy in age is such an objection, Rhoda. Do you suppose I ever think whether Traquair is younger than I am? If you're fond of a person you don't stop to think whether they're old or young. And I know he loves me. I can tell. Women of my age are proverbially dangerous, as you know. Besides—it wouldn't be fatal if he didn't. You don't have to feel a *grande passion* to get married, Rhoda. There isn't one in a hundred that's a real love match. There's always some other element that comes in, more or less. I never really cared much for your father, but we got along well enough together for ever so long—years—years! If he hadn't gone to drinking I could have stood it. Yes, I could, Rhoda! But as it was——"

Rhoda leaned forward and seized the thin, quivering hands. "Mother, dear! Please don't decide this now. You may feel quite different in the morning!"

Mrs. McLane withdrew her hands.

"It's no use, Rhoda. I've made up my mind."

"Very well, then!"

Rhoda went to the closet and took out a dress-suit case, which she opened upon the bed. Into it she began

to pack a few necessities. On a dresser stood a leather frame containing three photographs—her father, mother, and Ranny. This last she removed and laid on the top of the contents of the valise.

"What are you up to?" Mrs. McLane demanded.

Rhoda closed the bag and moved slowly toward the door. Mrs. McLane's face showed that she was going through some sort of a struggle.

"Rhoda!" she begged. "Don't go away like that! Don't you see? This means life—*life!* I can't give it up yet! It isn't as if you were a child. You're a grown-up woman! You'll be getting married yourself soon, leading your own life. I've as much right to live as you. And I want my happiness! Why should I give up Traquair? He's the only man that's loyal to me! I love him! And I need a man to look after me! Oh, Rhoda!"

Rhoda shook her head.

"I can't stay here any longer, mother."

"Where are you going?"

"To Cecily Coutant's—for a few days."

"Where's that?"

"Washington Mews."

Mrs. McLane had regained her self-possession.

"And then?"

"To West Virginia, to work among the tent colonists—the strikers and their families."

"Have you any money?"

"Forty dollars."

"All I can say is, you're a very foolish girl!"

Rhoda came back and kissed her mother on the cheek. It was as cold as it looked.

"Good-by, mother," she said.

Then, picking up the bag, she left the room. The little elevator carried her silently to the front hall. The footman was no longer visible, but the fedora, with its bit of flamingo feather, still lay on the table.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE PIRATES' CAVE

THE watchman standing behind the tree-trunk at the curbing in front of the Graham mansion recognized John's step and sauntered unobtrusively around the corner. Several years of waiting for possible kidnappers and assassins had made his ear expert. To-night it told him that the step, usually so methodical and leisurely, had a new quality—it was quick, nervous, impulsive.

The house itself was an abortive offspring of the architectural liaison between Mansard and Queen Victoria, solid, comfortable, with ceilings on the first floor fourteen feet high. It stood on a corner in the midst of a rather barren grass plot containing several fine buttonwood trees, and surrounded by a brownstone balustrade. That the Grahams should occupy and seemingly be contented in it puzzled many people and aggrieved some others. But in this house Thornton Graham and his wife had found most of what happiness their lives had offered, and they would not have changed it.

Brophy had stood there in the shadows nearly fifteen years—fourteen years, ten months, and twenty-one days, to be exact—and during that time there had been but one bomb, an amateur affair that had fizzled out like a damp firecracker, and one actual attempt on the boss's life. The bullet had only nicked his employer's ear, for Brophy had knocked the man senseless on the instant. He was serving a life sentence up the River—a harmless looking person enough he'd looked in the Sessions, where



Brophy had proudly officiated as the sole witness. The nine crazy men who had made their appearance at various times had all yielded more or less reluctantly to Brophy's "kidding" and accompanied him to Bellevue. Twice rocks had been hurled through the windows of the great Crane-Simplex limousine, with its bullet-proof reinforced lining—once when it was empty. That was the catalogue of violence. Yet Brophy had never relaxed his vigilance. He did not now. Although he went around the corner he watched carefully until John had climbed the steep flight of brown-stone steps and the yellow drug-get that lay across the bare earth of the grass plot showed that the door had been opened.

There had been a fellow from the District Attorney's office hanging around most of the afternoon with some sort of a paper. No process server had subpoenaed any one of the Grahams in all the fourteen years Brophy had been on duty. And, of course, it was useless for anybody to ring the bell. No one could get by Lattimer, the butler, although physically he was a shrunken, silver-haired little man, whom Ezra had left behind him, familiarly known to the family as "Bish" out of deference to a celebrated Anglican bishop of like name.

With the exception of this heirloom, the Grahams kept no men-servants, and the guest who dined at their table found himself being waited upon by two starched and rather elderly females, known formally as Lizzie and Mary, but familiarly as "Queen Elizabeth" and "Mary Queen of Scots." There was, it should be at once admitted, nothing smart—in the sense in which the word is used in America—about the Graham establishment.

John threw his hat on the mahogany table against the staircase, and with some impatience suffered Lattimer to remove his coat.

"Where's father?" he asked rather excitedly.

"In the workroom, Mr. Johnny. He's got that Mr. Degotay in there with him."

"Anybody for supper?"

The Grahams for some reason lost to recollection invariably referred as "supper" to the eight o'clock meal generally known to New Yorkers as "dinner."

"Only Mr. Shiras Graham, sir. That is—unless your father asks——"

"Mother in?"

"Yes, sir. She's up with Miss Toto. Miss Ditty is there, too."

John walked the length of the hall, passing the open door of the drawing-room upon his left, traversed the lamp-lit library, shelf-filled to the ceiling, and opened a door leading into a small room in the "extension." The air in there was hazy with tobacco smoke. At one end a big man in overalls was working upon the model of a clipper ship, and smoking a short pipe, so engrossed in something he was doing to the bowsprit that he did not notice John. Beside him were a tin of spar varnish, a brush, chunks of putty and beeswax, thread, twine, a broken kitchen knife, a file, sandpaper, scissors, and an assortment of awls and pincers.

At the other end of the room stood a hairy little man in a blue smock engaged in modelling the bust of the carpenter. He worked furiously, his brows drawn nervously together, his sharp brown eyes shooting impatiently from his sitter to the nearly completed bust. He was short, thick, with a pointed beard and a shock of curly hair. In his general effect he bore a close resemblance to a small black, highly vitalized woolly bear. Drawing his thumb deftly beneath the chin of the clay, and then down the neck and across the shoulder, he

stood back, cocked his head, glanced at the man working on the ship, lighted a cigarette, and remarked:

"Well, that ought to hold us for to-day!"

Then he saw John, and nodded.

"Hello!" he said. "The Malefactor's been very good to-day—gave me a full hour. At this rate we ought to get through in a few more sittings."

Thornton Graham finished winding a bit of thread around the bowsprit of the clipper, made it fast with a small pair of tweezers, and gave it a touch of varnish.

"Hello, Jacko! Yes, we've had a grand time to-day! A regular riot! But let me tell you that bust would never get finished if I couldn't put in the time on the *Diana*. Kill two birds with one stone!"

"You bet it wouldn't!" retorted the sculptor. "You couldn't sit still long enough! It's appalling——"

He began to cover the clay. The Malefactor arose and knocked the ashes from his pipe.

"Well, son! What do you think of her?"

John put his arm around his father's shoulders and hugged him.

"It's great, dad! You ought to have been a ship-builder. There was a *Diana*, wasn't there?"

"Of course! Your great-grandfather built the *Diana* for the China trade in seventeen ninety-eight. He put every cent he had into her. She held the record to Canton. He sent her out uninsured—the premium was too high—and when they reached the Straits they jammed every inch of canvas they had on her, shut their eyes, and sent her booming through. There wasn't a buoy or a lighthouse, and hardly a sounding. They sailed by dead reckoning, and took chances on rocks, reefs, and pirates—and, for those days, made a fortune."

"Ah!" exclaimed the sculptor. "That was something

like! I bet you wish sometimes you were in the China trade yourself!"

"I've been called a pirate often enough! It's a queer thing, the way the taste for the sea lingers in the blood. Strange I should get most of my fun making toy boats. Won't you stay to supper, Degoutet?"

"Do!" urged John. "And afterward I'll show you father's collection of ship models."

"All right," replied Degoutet. "I was going out to dine somewhere, but I forget where."

He tossed away his half-finished cigarette and lighted another. Without his smock he was even more unprepossessing than in his working attire. He had on a blue flannel shirt loosely tucked into baggy black trousers, which clung about his waist without obvious means of support and accumulated in accordion folds about the ankles of an ancient pair of once yellow shoes. He wore no waistcoat, his bobtail jacket was of a weird, unearthly tan, and his tie a remnant of foulard suggesting "La Source" or "Nude Descending a Staircase." Thus arrayed he felt completely at his ease—for he challenged no comparison. He was *sui generis*, this Raoul Degoutet, son of a Basque horse-breeder and a Moscow dancing-girl—winner of the Prix de Rome and now "King of Macdougall Alley" and "Emperor of Washington Mews."

Impudent or suave, as best suited his purposes, he knew just when to flatter and when to be impertinent to rich women. While he could charm like a courtier, he was generally caustic, arrogant, and often impudent. He was both witty and brazenly coarse, and his indelicacies were generally taken as delightful drolleries. He was vain, insolent to those who bored him, warm-hearted, wholly unmoral, a braggart, swaggering through the

drawing-rooms of New York, London, and Paris like a swashbuckling pirate on the deck of Art.

To his astonishment he had found himself becoming a warm admirer of a man whom he had theretofore habitually and scathingly excoriated. He hated millionaires and made no bones about it, referring to them as blood-suckers, parasites, "strong-arm men," Philistines. His blue flannel shirt was not an affectation, but it might easily have become one. He was a radical, an insurgent, an iconoclast, because he rebelled at the limitations and restraints of convention. He believed that he should be free to express himself in any way that he chose, not excluding his art. The thought of Pegasus harnessed in a delivery wagon revolted him. Yet when a lady of fashion commissioned him to make a bronze statue in memory of her sweet little Pekingese which had died of asthma he did so, and charged her only five thousand dollars.

Thornton Graham positively amazed him. The fellow got nothing whatever for his money! Now he, Raoul—for all that he had a Greek wife in Crete, "living in a tree," as he was carelessly accustomed to say—would have had a dozen—no, two dozen—mistresses! This sheep drank malted milk, and when he wasn't working went to bed at ten o'clock! Bah! It was appalling!

Left alone to smoke in the long, dim library until dinner-time, he ran plump into a Rembrandt—"The Miser"—and turned cold. One of the most famous pictures in the world! Two Corots, a Hoppner, a Gainsborough, and others equally famous were hung unostentatiously about the room.

Toto's room was over the conservatory and occupied the whole east side of the house. The family used it as



a sitting-room, invariably gathering there for the half-hour before the evening meal. She had sat there in her wheel-chair for five years now, ever since August, 1916, when the infantile plague had transformed her in a night from an athletic girl of seventeen into the invalid she now was. They had fled from New York to their Adirondack camp to escape it, but although the nearest case had been twenty miles away Toto had been unaccountably stricken. So far, no specialist had been able to stimulate more than a hint of muscular activity in her wasted limbs.

She was sitting as usual in the bow window with Mrs. Graham as her father and John entered.

"Such a wonderful book mother has been reading to me!" she said, smiling a welcome.

Her mother, a somewhat faded woman of the blond English type, closed the book and placed it on the rack beside the girl's chair.

"I wish we had more like it," she said.

Thornton crossed the room and kissed his daughter upon the forehead.

"Here we are!" he exclaimed jovially. "The Graham Brothers from Wall Street!" Then he quickly turned away. "I must wash up!" he said gruffly. "Hello, you Ditty!"

Perdita Graham, who had been lying flat on the sofa, swung her legs to the floor, sat up, and threw herself into her father's arms.

"Rascal!" he gasped, hugging her to him. "I hear your ribald old Uncle Shiras is taking you to the Follies!"

"And we've got another present for you!" said John. "A *young man* is coming to dinner!"

Ditty unloosed her hold upon her father's neck and danced back.



"Who is it?" she demanded shrilly.

"Mr. Raoul Degoutet, the sculptor!"

"Oh!" said Toto eagerly. "I should so like to see him! Couldn't you bring him up for a moment after dinner?"

"I'll fetch him up now if you say so, mother," said John.

Mrs. Graham looked doubtfully at her husband, who nodded.

"Why not? None of us are going to dress. Trot him up, Jacko! Ditty mustn't be allowed to hog him entirely."

John disappeared, returning almost immediately with Degoutet, who had hardly been presented to Toto before a tall, gray-haired Scotch nurse came in, wheeling the latter's supper. She had been with the Grahams since their marriage, had cared for each of the children in turn, and had now transferred her devotion to the invalid.

"Good evening, Nana!" growled Thornton. "I suppose you're going to drive us all out!"

An instant later Lattimer appeared in the doorway.

"Mr. Shiras Graham is here. Dinner is served, madam."

Degoutet, who had been standing silent by Toto's chair, bent over and kissed the back of her transparent hand as it lay extended upon the arm. The girl flushed, with a half-startled look of pleasure. Nana lightly swept Toto's hair with the ends of her fingers.

"I hope you're not too tired, dear?" she whispered.

Mrs. Graham led the way downstairs and into the drawing-room, where a handsome old man, dressed in broadcloth cutaway, was sitting in an armchair studying one of the pictures.

"Hello, Jean!" he called out in a sort of shout, with-

out getting up. "Hello, Degoutet! Hello, everybody!"

Perdita kissed him and he pinched her cheek playfully.

"How are you, sir!" answered Degoutet. "Rather nice, that!" casually indicating the Rembrandt, which had cost Thornton Graham two hundred thousand dollars.

"Yes," answered his host. "It's really too good to keep down here. I think I'll have to send it up to the Metropolitan with the others."

Although the sculptor approved of most Rembrandts being placed in museums on general principles, at that moment he would have been willing to let this particular Rembrandt stay where it was—at least for a reasonable length of time.

"I shall miss it," declared Mrs. Graham as she moved toward the hall. "And yet having distinguished guests—however delightful they are—is always something of a strain, and one feels a certain relief when they go!"

Degoutet, to his own astonishment, found himself replying:

"Well, nobody would miss it from the Metropolitan if it stayed here!"

"Hang it!" suddenly roared Uncle Shiras. "Why don't you keep it? It's yours, isn't it? You paid for it, didn't you?"

"That would be too selfish!" she reproved him. "Of course we always keep the new pictures for a little while, in order to get to know them. It's rather a bother to take visitors up to the Museum!"

"Bosh!" snorted the old man. "You'd have nothing belonging to anybody!"

"Dinner!" she smiled. "Come on, nunkie!"

She took his arm and led him to his place. Degoutet found himself opposite John and beside the girl.

The dining-room was large, old-fashioned, decorated with glass chandeliers from which hung myriads of quivering pendants. There was a crispness of linen, a mellowness of leather, a weight to the silver service—that satisfied something in Degoutet's nature which he would ordinarily have repudiated. Failing to observe that none of the family except Shiras took anything to drink, he assumed that the "Vat 69" and the Johannisberger Cabinet with which his glass was filled was their customary beverage. He knew good wine. It was about the only thing for which he envied the rich. Johannisberger Cabinet! His eye rested on the dusty label with secret joy.

"Page Mr. Volstead!" was what he said. "Wow!"

"We've got plenty of it!" replied his host. "And if we don't drink it up it will spoil. Besides, the foreigners—well, here's to America's greatest work of art—'Bust of Predatory Financier' by Degoutet."

The butler filled the sculptor's goblet a second time from the cobwebbed bottle, and Degoutet, whose feelings were already kindly, expanded.

"That fool amendment!" growled Graham. "We're the most over-governed people in the world!"

Shiras, with the end of his napkin stuffed into his collar, turned upon him.

"Governed? My Lord, Thornton! We're all being buffaloes! Talk about the possibility of socialism—what do you call it when I have to shell out over fifty per cent of my income in taxes? We've *got* socialism. Before long a fellow won't be able to wear a beard without getting permission from some confounded board of barbers."

"Appalling!" agreed Degoutet.

He would have liked to do a bust of the old fellow in his napkin. He enjoyed these people; told himself he was crazy about them; and he let himself go, in his customary Brevoort House manner, wholly unconscious that his hostess was leading him on and making him feel at ease with a skill polished to a fine *patine* by a familiar contact with diplomatic life at home and abroad.

Old Shiras watched him sardonically, wedging in a growl at intervals. It was clear he knew a thing or two about pictures himself. Degoutet allowed his glass to be filled several times. He felt extraordinarily at home with these people. The real stuff—all of them. The boy—John—seemed like a sensible, quiet chap. Degoutet liked his slow smile and extraordinary blue eyes. He'd never seen any others like them. The girl—a swarthy brunette—struck him somehow as a bit restive, frequently disagreeing with her mother, more as if to assert her right to hold her own opinions than because she had any. He could feel her studying him all through the meal. She was only a kid—seventeen at the most—but she was physically mature for her age, and he could feel that subtle emanation to which he was so sensitive—and which was so in contrast with the rest of the atmosphere. She was going to be a “husk”—like her father. She had his drooping eyes and heavy brows that almost met. “Pepper!” And “salt” too! It wouldn't take much to make her break loose!

Thornton Graham carved the turkey at a small side-table on wheels which afterward was pushed along from place to place. Standing there brandishing the implement in his hand preliminary to attacking the bird, with his napkin thrust in the aperture of his waistcoat, the banker had a distinctly piratical look. Physically he had the solidity of old Shiras, of all the Grahams; the big

barrel, the round head and thick neck, coupled with that unmistakable droop to the eyes. What gave him the final touch of the buccaneer was the dark curved mustache.

"Prepare to repel boarders!" laughed Degoutet. "I should have done you that way—a red scarf around your head and a knife in your teeth."

His host grinned.

"I do sometimes get out my knife," he admitted. "But then," and he sliced off several juicy slivers of breast, "I'm always ready to walk the plank at any time."

"You missed your vocation!" the sculptor assured him. "*Sapristi!* I could have been a pirate myself!"

He threw a gleam of white teeth about the table.

"That was the life, eh? It had the punch that everybody is looking for. There's no real joy nowadays!"

"How's that?" roared Shiras at him. "What the deuce do you mean by joy, young man?"

"I mean," replied the sculptor, "a concentrated instant of emotion as contrasted with the happiness that's spread thin. What the opera singer feels when the house rises to his high note. The prize-fighter gets it when he knocks the other fellow out with a hook to the jaw—the spasm—the 'zowie'! You couldn't get happiness being a pirate, but you could have a lot of joy, now, couldn't you, when you triced 'em up to the yard-arm? Get my idea?"

"Yes," chuckled the old man, winking at Perdita, "I get your idea! And that little concentrated instant of emotion has cost me a lot of money in my time!"

Thornton Graham had returned to his seat, and "Queen Elizabeth" was wheeling the turkey.

"No doubt there is something physical about it," said



the banker. "Perhaps that's why every man who is worth anything loves to work with his hands. The sculptor enjoys his work more than the banker. That's the reason I whittle out ships; why women knit."

"Right-o!" answered Degoutet, helping himself to turkey. "I've never wanted to be a financier!"

"Pish-posh!" exclaimed Shiras. "I'll bet now, Degoutet, you wouldn't take a million dollars if it were offered you!"

The sculptor stretched out his arms toward the chandelier.

"My God—wouldn't I! Just give me one little chance! My dear sir, money is all I work for! A million? Come, little one, fly right to papa!"

The Johannisberger, as he might have said himself, was getting a bit into his nose. Through a golden haze he saw his hostess getting up and Thornton Graham helping Shiras to his feet. The banker apologized for having to leave so soon. He had, he explained, an appointment with the Italian High Commissioner at nine, and it was almost that hour now. Degoutet forgot all about John's offer to show him the collection of ship models. He became convinced that he must not lose his host at this important juncture. Without any definite idea of where he was going or what he was going to do, he asked for a lift.

"Bish" helped Shiras into his heavy blue overcoat, stiff as a Brussels carpet, and handed him his cane.

Ditty came flying downstairs, cheeks aflame, and gave her mother a loud kiss.

"Good night, Jean!" bellowed the old man. "Come on, flapper! Let's go paint up the town!"



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE GRAHAM GENESIS

THAT amiable biographer of American millionaires, Mr. Bellamy Wing, of the well-known brokerage firm of Wing, Bucket & Wing, in his naïve and entertaining volume entitled "Men and Money"—or is it "Money and Men"?—gives his entire seventeenth chapter to the genesis of the Grahams. Having inherited that reverence for wealth which marked his generation—he was born in 1841—he takes no pains to conceal his admiration for the entire family.

"The Graham family," says he, "is of New England extraction, Homer Graham, the founder, having been born on a farm in Topsfield, Massachusetts, in 1779. At the age of sixteen he moved to Salem, where he became supercargo on a vessel engaged in the China trade; but it was not long before a series of small but lucky investments enabled him to build and fit out a ship of his own—the celebrated barque *Diana*—which in a half-dozen voyages to Canton, Sumatra, and Mozambique netted him and his associates a couple of hundred thousand dollars. From then on his wealth increased rapidly. He built other ships and extended their voyages to new or little visited ports. In 1810, having made the most of the neutral trade, he sold his ships, came to New York, and invested the major portion of his fortune in Manhattan farm land.

"His eyes, however, still turned toward the sea, and before long he sought and found an opportunity to re-enter commerce. On the revival of business after the

war of 1812 he sold some of his land and opened an importing house, where his son Mungo, who made the Graham name famous, received his early training. Graham & Son was already one of the richest houses in America when the discovery of gold in California offered the phenomenal opportunities for trade which became the chief factor in their colossal fortune. Here the keen business judgment of the Grahams was disclosed. Mungo's son Ezra was sent out to California, but not to look for gold-bearing quartz. In Sacramento he, at the age of twenty-four, opened a branch of Graham & Son.

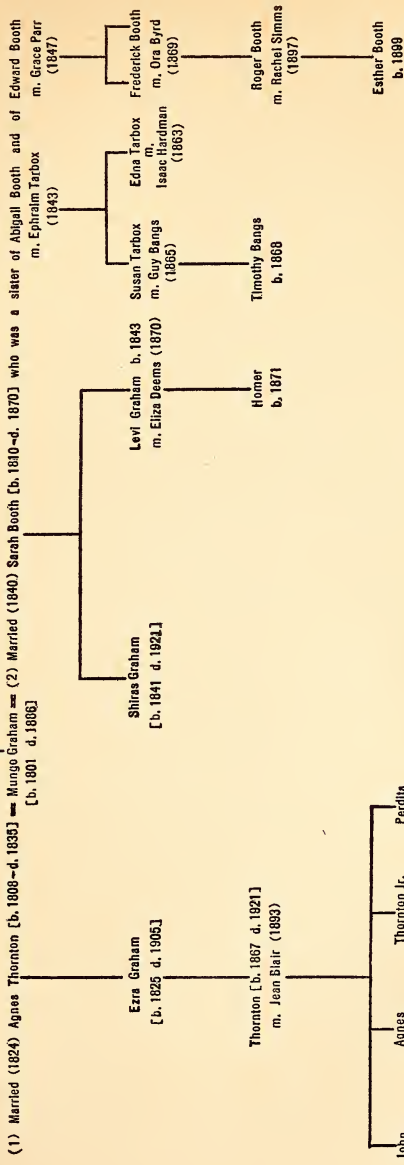
"Instead of 'staking' prospectors or going in for wild-cat schemes, Mungo Graham loaded his ships with shovels, rope, ploughs, sugar, boots, and blankets and sent them round Cape Horn to his son Ezra, who accepted the miners' gold in exchange. Everything he touched literally 'turned to gold.'

"Mungo's two other sons by a second marriage—Shiras, born in 1841, and Levi, born in 1843—share their elder brother Ezra's ability. The one built up the great Birmingham steel industry; the other became a specialist in New York real estate.

"Ezra, the financial genius of the family, died in 1905 at the age of eighty years, leaving one son, Thornton, now the president of Graham & Co. Mr. Shiras Graham has never married. Mr. Levi Graham is a widower with one bachelor son, Mr. Homer Graham, the well-known art connoisseur, whose collection of original death-masks is said to be the most complete in the world."

Wing's book is interesting for many reasons. For instance, it seems rather strange to find him deeming it necessary to defend—as he does many times—the practice of gentlemen going into Wall Street. Can it be pos-

Homer Graham  
b. 1779—d. 1851



## COLLATERALS

## THE GRAHAM GENESIS



sible that so recently as in the eighties of the last century anybody could lose caste by making money in stocks?

What a change, too, has come over the complexion of the national mind—even of the mind financially attuned—from a period when Mr. Wing could quote with exultant approval Mr. Depew's positive assertion to Mr. Gladstone that in America a fortune of one hundred million was not regarded as dangerous.

Dangerous! To him the suggestion that the Graham fortune, or any other, could by any possibility or in any way be a menace either to their countrymen or to themselves seems utterly absurd.

Wing's chief claim to distinction lay in his intimacy with Shiras. To the weazened soul of Wing the parasite, there was something magnificent and eternal about this financial oak to which he clung. He and the big-barrelled, massive Shiras, with the Jove-like head and thunderous voice, lunched together at old Delmonico's almost every day for thirty years—oysters and champagne. And to give him his due, Shiras was really a tremendous fellow, with all the uncanny shrewdness of, and far more daring than, Mungo, his father, or Ezra, his half-brother. He was hard as a granite cliff, stingy to everybody but himself—Wing always paid for the luncheon in return for his buying and selling orders—with a single-minded and ruthless lust for power that drowned the voice of conscience and defied all opposition; a “take 'em out and shoot 'em” fellow, a crusher, who would buy a woman or a railroad and devour either without blinking. Each of his bastards received one hundred thousand dollars in trust when he or she became of age, with remainders over to Shiras himself in case of survival. At one time there was nearly a million so tied up. But already he had outlived five of his beneficiaries.

A strong man! In Wing's eyes, a great one. This the head, by virtue of years, of the Graham Family.

Of Levi, his younger brother by two years, he was accustomed to speak slightly to Wing.

"The fellow's shrewd enough," he would say, "but he has no guts! I can't imagine where he gets all that psalm singing. There never was any religion in the family that I heard of.—Are you through with that bottle?—Why on earth he wants to spawn those Community Houses, as he calls 'em, all over the country I can't imagine! Nobody wants 'em, and yet they're ashamed to refuse for fear they'll be accused of a lack of public spirit! Public spirit be damned! He makes 'em pay half the cost and then name 'em after him as if he'd done it all himself. 'The Levi Graham Neighborhood House'!—Thanks! I will have another cutlet!—All nonsense! What do they use 'em for? Moving pictures, by gad! The town shells out twelve thousand dollars and Levi puts up another twelve, and the town has to hire a custodian and like as not a furnace man, and pay for lighting and heating, so's one old maid can go there and read *The Baby's World* and half a dozen young lechers can sit in the dark Saturday nights. Philanthropy? Hell!"

Thus Shiras on Levi.

It is true that there was a certain element of the *quid pro quo* demanded by Levi's method of giving which robbed it in part of its open-handedness. He had given away twenty million dollars in twenty years, but he had nevertheless the reputation of meanness. He had assisted in the building of churches, hospitals, university settlements, auditoriums; yet although in almost every case the structure bore his name on the façade, nobody gave him any credit or thought of him as really inter-



ested. Probably he wasn't, and that was the trouble. And, of course, any town of over five thousand inhabitants could get a "Levi Graham Community House" for the asking, provided the request was accompanied by a certified copy of the town meeting resolution, prepared by Levi's own lawyer, by which the voters pledged themselves to raise their part of the money, which on subsequent examination they would probably find to be the legal equivalent of a promissory note. These houses were popularly supposed to be portable and kept in cold storage, ready for delivery; but this was an exaggeration: they were merely made from a stock Colonial design, of fireproof brick, with fluted pillars of Indiana limestone, and cost less to the cubic foot than anything of the kind yet put up.

"Wing!" Shiras would continue—for he never, even after a friendship of sixty-five years, had called him by his first name—"Yes, I will have a cigar—a Corona! Those are all right!—As I was saying, Wing, Levi is a confounded ass. How does he imagine that he can fool anybody? He knows all this charity business is nonsense as well as you do. Some feller said that the best thing to do with the submerged tenth is to let 'em drown. I'd say—to drown 'em in the first place. He acts as if he was ashamed of his money! What's he afraid of?

"Ever read any of his speeches? You know he goes round all the time addressing men's meetings and Sunday schools and that sort of thing. Well, he always sings the same old song. Parson Robinson—who hopes to have Levi slip him a hundred or so, or build him a parsonage—gets up and introduces him as 'that great citizen and good Samaritan, that public benefactor, our beloved brother in Christ, Mr. Levi Graham,' and Levi pulls a long face as if he had a bellyache and gets sol-

emly up before the assembled body of postmen, plumbers' assistants, soda clerks, telegraph boys, and rummies, and has the nerve to tell 'em that money is the source of all the unhappiness in the world, that the rich are always miserable, and that the poor are the only people who are happy. He always raises a laugh with that old crack of his, 'The almighty dollar is an almighty curse.' And they suck it all up, or pretend to! Why doesn't some chap in the bunch have courage enough to stand up and say, 'Well, Mr. Graham, if you're so darned miserable with your money, why don't you get rid of it?'"

"Very well put! Very well put, indeed!" says Wing, a bit anxious as to how far he ought to commit himself with regard to such an excellent customer as his guest's brother. "But shall I say—a little—perhaps a trifle severe?"

"Severe!" Shiras glares at him. "Severe, Wing! Fiddlesticks! Do you think Levi has any human kindness in his dried-up old body? Not an atom. He likes money just as much as I do—or you do, Wing! He's a coward, that's all. I've got the courage to stand up and say to the world: 'Yes, damn you, I've got fifty million dollars! Come and take it away from me if you can! I'm going to have all the fun I can out of it while I'm alive, and do jolly well what I want to with it when I die.' They respect me for it too, Wing! Nobody loves a millionaire. They are going to scoff at him while he's above ground and slander him when he's underneath. He might just as well do what he likes as to be accused of it. Give a dog a bad name—I haven't decided yet what I will do with my money. I've given the matter a good deal of thought—a great deal of thought, I may say. In fact, the business worries me quite a lot. Do you know, Wing, it's a dickens of a job to decide what

to do with fifty million dollars so that any benefit will come of it?"

"Quite so!" Mr. Wing pours out another pony of brandy.

"Y'know, Wing, I rather like the idea of this scientific research business. Great thing to find cures for all these diseases and so on. Wish they had one for Bright's! I'll die of it, sure! Fine lot of work they've done investigating heart disease and spider bite and leprosy, and all that. It appeals to me. That other idea I don't care for so much—this foundation business. It goes against my grain, putting up fifty millions for all eternity for a self-perpetuating board of trustees to distribute anyhow they see fit. How do I know what they'll do with it? They might even give it to some socialist chap to build an academy with. If there was only some way that I could feel it was being properly used! But there isn't. You know, sometimes I lie awake all night thinking about the thing—Hello! It's a quarter to three! Let's go over to the office and see how Lackawanna closes."

Two portraits, in oil, hang in the board room of Graham & Co. The first, smoothly done by Fagnani in 1883, is of a jolly old boy with pouchy cheeks and a bald dome surrounded by an emperor's wreath of white curly locks—Mungo, the founder of the house. He has evidently been reading a letter, and its advices have pleased him; for he has pushed up his gold spectacles on to his forehead and is looking out of the picture at you so amiably that it is certain he smells the spices being unloaded from the clipper ship discernible through the counting-house window in the rear. The face, however, is merely that of a pleasant old gentleman, in a decorative embroidered dressing-gown, who has grown mellow counting

whatever there is to count in counting-houses; and perhaps from drinking whatever there may have been in the cellar below. Fagnani has executed the portrait as he would that of a popular baritone, and old Mungo might do well enough for the jovial monk, the vociferous notary, the adoring papa or—with an extra touch here and there—the elderly roué in any one of a dozen operas. A fine portrait, a splendid portrait, which looked exactly like the shell of Mungo and bore not the remotest resemblance to the inner man—the dexterous photography of a superficial Italian artist who could not see an eighth of an inch under a sitter's cuticle and who has painted the old *Diana* as seen through the window with her foretopgallant sails flying, although she is warped solidly to the wharf.

The second portrait—of Ezra, the eldest son—is different stuff altogether. John Sargent did it while working on his decorations of the Boston Public Library in 1901, and when Ezra Graham was seventy-six years old. There are neither ships nor counting-houses nor embroidered dressing-gowns—nothing but a grim old man in a claret-colored skull-cap. You look in vain for collar, waistcoat, or neckerchief; there is nothing but a green smear melting into a smear of darker green which is the background. It was dashed off during a flying trip to New York, in two sittings, and is not even signed. Yet it is a perfect portrait of a human soul in terms of lips and eyes.

In Ezra Graham burned a consuming fire of creative energy. He saw his millions piling up and rejoiced in their increase as somehow indicating the Almighty's approval of himself and all his enterprises. Conscious of his own abilities, and scornful of those of lesser men and their opinions, he took no counsel and had the courage

of his own convictions. He was pointed to with pride and admiration as a man who, by his energy, enthusiasm, and enterprise, had opened up the country, developed industry and created untold opportunity. Some may have envied him his profits; but even these would have admitted that he was entitled to them. He gave munificently, but rarely to private charities, preferring to build towns rather than hospitals. But fundamentally he cared nothing for giving unless by giving he was creating. At one time he had in the employ of his various undertakings upward of a hundred thousand men. He believed in the gospel of hard work, the law of supply and demand, and that he was the boss of his own works. He distrusted trade unionism and denounced socialism as a doctrine of Satan. He neither smoked nor drank, ate sparingly, read nothing, was constantly traveling from one place to another, slept often in his clothes, believed in the absolute necessity of personal oversight and direction, had no time to give a thought to either women or marriage until he was over forty years of age, and never could tell the "Celest' Aïda" from "Yankee Doodle." One and all agreed he was a good man.

He died in his eightieth year, a rugged figure, universally mourned, without ever in his life having made an intellectual concession or done anything for effect. In this last respect his half-brother Shiras was far more like him than the timid and apologetic Levi, whose constant attitude was one of propitiation, and for whose only surviving son, Homer, Ezra had entertained an undisguised contempt. The boy, he said, had never done anything except potter around museums. Why didn't he get out and do something?

Between the portraits of Mungo and Ezra there hung a faded but exquisitely painted picture by Cammillieri,



done in 1800, of the bark *Diana* entering Salem Harbor under full sail. Presumably the moment selected by the artist was her return from her famous cruise around the world with the cargo of spice and pepper upon which the Graham fortune was erected. But the picture was a small one, and there was ample room for the third portrait which it was understood would be eventually placed there, that of Ezra's son Thornton—described with others by Rooseveltian orators as a “malefactor of great wealth.”



## CHAPTER IX

### PUBLIC SERVICE

JOHN walked with his mother through the drawing-room, his arm around her waist. He always told her everything. Should he tell her now of his meeting with Rhoda? It was she, however, who began the confidences.

"I'm a little worried about Ditty," she sighed. "She seems rather antagonistic—without any reason. I'm afraid she's a trifle spoiled."

Indeed, the barrier of age which inevitably rears itself for a few years between mother and daughter had recently made itself manifest. And Thornton, now a senior at Harvard, was already going the way of all young flesh.

"She's only excited," John assured her as they paused before "The Miser." "All the girls of her age are, Mumsey. You'll see. She'll be all right at twenty."

"I hope so! Parents don't seem to have any real influence any longer. The influences that are molding her lie outside the family, in society itself, and they're stronger than the home."

"Do you think wealth poisons people?" asked John.

"Some people."

"Do you believe that money will always get you in the end—if you live long enough?" he went on.

"Why, John!" she answered, looking up at him. "What a cynical idea! Of course not! Those people who are ready to be corrupted—who have, as one might say, a tendency to money disease—are infected, poisoned;

but they are simply like all the rest who can't stand temptation. There are just as many kindly and decent rich people as any other."

"And as happy?"

"I don't know—about that," she hesitated. "Probably not. They don't have the daily satisfaction of regular work."

"Well, money certainly never hurt father!" exclaimed John warmly.

They walked on the length of the room and turned back, their arms still around each other.

"Wealth merely gave him certain opportunities," she added, "just as it deprived him of others."

"What others?"

"He would have liked to go into politics, for instance. But of course he couldn't. He would have been accused of buying any party that nominated him and corrupting all those who voted for him. John, if you could ever know what a wonderful man he is! How he works for others! How gravely he takes his responsibilities!"

"Indeed I do!" he answered with enthusiasm. "Dad's a wonder! How old was he when he got married?"

She looked up at him whimsically.

"Twenty-seven."

"Just my age!"

"I hope you're not contemplating matrimony, my dear!"

John laughed self-consciously.

"No, mother—not immediately."

"I'm glad," she said. "You have so much to learn about business. These next few years will be hard ones. Your father has got to teach you all he knows. John, I don't think he looks very well. Do you?"

"No," he answered, "but I think it's only worrying about this coal situation. It's in a terrible mess!"

"I don't like the way he looks," she said. "And he never stops working! I'm really worried about him."

"Can't you persuade him to go up to camp?"

"I think we should try."

"All right—a conspiracy! We'll swear a terrible oath to make dad take a good rest!"

Jean pulled down his head and kissed him.

"You're a dear boy, John! I wish Thorny were more like you!"

She looked toward the doorway. Lattimer was standing there.

"Pardon me, madam, but there's a man here who insists on my handing Mr. John this paper. He says that personal service isn't necessary so long as he's sure he's received it. I think it is quite safe, sir. It is only a jury notice."

"All right," said John, with a slight feeling of relief. "Let him come in. Excuse me, mumsey!"

He went into the hall and presently returned holding an oblong printed slip, which he gave to her:

To JOHN GRAHAM, 47 Park Avenue, New York City.

Take notice that you are hereby summoned to attend in your capacity as a grand juror of the Supreme Court of the State of New York at Part 1 of the General Sessions of the Peace for the June term, beginning Monday, —, 1921.

PETER J. DOOLING, *Clerk*.

"Mr. Pepperill can probably get you off," she said. "He has a great deal of influence. He can arrange it so that you need not serve."

"But why shouldn't I serve?" he asked. "You just

said that father always wanted to be of some public service. Why isn't this my chance?"

There was an unusual eagerness in his voice.

"Would you like to?"

"I'm not sure that I wouldn't," he confessed. "I'd rather like to get more in touch with—with real life!"

"I know, dear," she said. "But there are many things to be considered even if your father could spare you from the bank. The politicians are very adroit and so unscrupulous! If you were not embarrassed yourself, it's quite possible your presence might be used to discredit the jury's work. I should go into all that fully with Mr. Pepperill."

"Are we so terribly important as all that?" grumbled John.

"John," she warned him, "don't underestimate the wickedness there is in the world or the hatred some people have for us!"

He gave her a squeeze, laughing. Should he tell her about Rhoda? But what was there to tell her? "Mumsey," he said, kissing her hair, "I guess I'll go up and read awhile in preparation for my arduous public duties!"

John dwelt under the mansard through the windows of which he had, in his earlier years, "plugged down" upon passing pedestrians and truckmen potatoes, carrots, and other ammunition filched from the storeroom. He had refused to give it up, and on his return from college had reinstalled himself there. It was a dreary enough place, straw-carpeted, with ancient walnut furniture and heavy bronze gas fixtures refinished for electricity. From the chandelier, as at Harvard, wearing a shrewd expression of beadlike inquiry, swung Johnny the Bear.

The draught from the door set the animal in motion

as John entered and threw on the light. Back and forth it swung, holding out its arms as it were in bearish affection.

"Well, old top!" remarked John. "How would you like to be on the grand jury?—How would you like to be married?"

. . . . .

When John arrived at 11 Washington Square next morning he found Mr. Pepperill still at breakfast, a newspaper propped against the coffee-pot in front of him. The tiny veins netting the old gentleman's face were purple.

"Of all the outrages! Listen to this: 'Unpartisan Citizens' Committee calls Bitumen Sink of Iniquity.

Bitumen, West Va.—The committee appointed by the Board of Aldermen to investigate and report upon the conditions surrounding the mining of the coal furnished to the public utilities of New York City denounced those conditions in unmeasured terms here to-day. 'When the voters of New York City learn the miserable situation of the men who slave for them underground, they will have something to say to their employers!' said Mr. Meyer B. Weinstock, the committee's secretary, as he took the train for home. The largest property in this neighborhood is that of the Mid-West Coal Company.

"A lie from beginning to end! That's modern politics and modern journalism! Bah! Have a cup of coffee?"

"No, thanks, I've had breakfast," replied John. "The fact is, I've been drawn on the grand jury."

"Drawn on the grand jury, eh?"

The old lawyer took off his glasses, touched his lips with his heavy damask napkin, and thrust a silver box toward his guest.

"Have a cigarette? Well, I suppose you want me to get you off?"

"No," answered John, helping himself from the box. "Personally, I don't. I rather think I'd like to serve; but mother said I'd better talk it over with you first."

Mr. Pepperill pushed back his chair.

"What do you want to be on the grand jury for?" he demanded crisply.

"Experience."

"Nonsense!" answered his host.

"But I've been summoned," protested John.

"That means nothing. Judge McFadden will excuse you for the term if I ask him to. Besides, they might get you into something that would be awkward. They might even have the impudence to set you investigating coal! No, that would be too raw! All the same, by George, there isn't much they wouldn't do. My advice to you, if you have any choice in the matter, is to keep out of anything that may lead to embarrassment or unpleasantness."

"I didn't keep out of the war!" countered John.

Mr. Pepperill flushed faintly.

"That was entirely different! Shall we go along?"

He laid his hand on John's shoulder.

"You'll have quite enough responsibilities as it is, my boy, without messing up in criminal affairs."

They found Judge McFadden reclining at a vast mahogany desk. He seemed to be holding a levee. Attendants came and went, bearing whispered messages from unseen visitors; a crowd of waiting suppliants for judicial favor hovered anxiously outside the threshold. The centre of all this importance greeted Mr. Pepperill with cordiality, and professed much pleasure at meeting John, but contrary to expectation he declared, when he



learned the nature of their errand, that it was quite unthinkable that he should excuse the latter from service.

"I'm sorry not to be able to oblige you, Mr. Graham," said Judge McFadden, lumbering to his feet and extending a fat hand. "If, at any time, there is anything else I can do for you which is properly within my discretion I shall be only too happy to do it."

Once outside Mr. Pepperill relieved his chagrin with more than his customary acerbity.

"Look out for him!" he warned as the elevator door closed. "I know these fellows. There's something doing. Keep your eyes open and don't get jockeyed into anything without proper legal advice. Well, good luck to you!"

It was nearly half-past ten, the hour for the grand jury's empanelment.

John walked along the corridor that ran around all four sides of the building and from the rail of which he could look down upon the marble floor of the rotunda directly below. There were policemen everywhere. Groups of stout, snuffy looking men smoking cigars leaned against each pillar in the marble desert downstairs as well as in the corridor itself. Somehow it made John think of the Stock Exchange and the groups of brokers gathered around each post. Only here, he told himself, instead of the signs being "Northern Pacific," "Atchison," or "Great Northern," they should read "Rape," "Arson," "Manslaughter." The predominant dialect was Yiddish, but the atmosphere was of Donnybrook.

"Grand jurors inside!"

John joined the crowd in the court room and watched Judge McFadden as he ceremoniously ascended the dais and directed the clerk—a tiny man with a huge mustache that gave him the appearance of an animated

mushroom—to call the roll of talesmen. John answered to his name along with the others; and, the jury having been drawn from the wheel, found himself among those chosen; then turned faint as the judge, searching among the assembled citizens, found and fixed him with his eye.

“I shall appoint as your foreman,” announced Judge McFadden in sonorous tones, “Mr. John Graham—Mr. Graham, will you kindly step forward and be sworn?”

Amid a buzz of interest John forced his way to the rail and took the oath. He was surprised and a trifle discomposed. Could they be trying to put something over on him about coal, as Mr. Pepperill had suggested? But he had no time for speculation as to the reason. The clerk was already swearing in the balance of the grand jury, who were now directed to sit down while His Honor delivered his charge.

The court captain rapped sharply on the rail with a superannuated paperweight.

“Mr. Officer,” called out the human mushroom in a voice of such extraordinary severity as to surprise John that anybody should dare to use it toward a policeman, “Mr. Officer, see that there is no traffic through that door.”

The officer nodded, and creeping on tiptoe to the door, removed the piece of rubber used to deaden sound and turned the key. Only an uneasy cough or so marred the perfect silence.

“Gentlemen of the Grand Jury,” began Judge McFadden impressively, “you are called here from your various vocations and avocations to perform that duty upon which the sanctity and preservation of our institutions most depend. Upon your honesty, impartiality, and courage hang the good name of our city and the

safety of its citizens. A gre-vi-ous assault has been made upon that fair name——”

The judge's voice trembled.

“It has been publicly alleged and stated in the public press that vice in all its most malignant forms flourishes in our midst—that a hee-nious traffic akin to slavery is systematically conducted here, threatening to contaminate our wives and daughters. If this be true it is, of course, your duty to say so, *but*”—here followed a long hiatus during which His Honor's eye seared the faces of those regarding him—“but—if it not be—if it be not—true, *then* it will be equally your sworn and solemn duty to fearlessly wipe away the foul stain and stigma that is plastered across our—our—scrutcheon!”

The learned Judge went on to point out that any such calumny was exceedingly injurious to the social and economic life of the city. Moreover, it might be a slander upon those who were seeking honestly to enforce the laws to the best of their ability. A thorough and complete investigation was demanded. The District Attorney's office and Police Department were at their absolute disposal. By the end of the month they ought to be in a position to make a conclusive presentment.

“You may now go to the room set apart for your use and proceed with your labors,” concluded His Honor, bowing over their heads.

“This way out, gentlemen!” directed the officer at the door.

John, bell-wether of the flock, allowed himself to be hustled out of the court room. As he stepped into the corridor there was a blinding flash followed by a muffled explosion. Ducking instinctively, he found himself in the midst of a thick cloud of white smoke.

“Thank you!” said a polite voice.

A photographer was rapidly disconnecting his apparatus and putting it into a box.

. . . . .

"Great Heavens, Thornton!" roared Shiras, storming into Graham & Co. on his way to lunch with Mr. Belamy Wing. "Do you see what that precious young ass of yours has done now?" He waved a pink sheet at the seated banker. "Got himself chosen foreman of a grand jury——"

"A vice-hunting grand jury!" piped Wing.

"The deuce he has!" ejaculated Thornton.

"See for yourself! He'll make us all ridiculous!"

Shiras stuffed the paper into his nephew's lap.

### JOHN GRAHAM

#### CHOSEN FOREMAN OF GRAND JURY

#### WILL CLEANSE CITY OF SEX CRIME IS HOPE

From below a face only remotely resembling John's stared out from a fancy border. It was labelled:

*John Graham*

*Banker and Vice Hunter*

Thornton read it and wilted.

"What in blazes do you pay Pepperill fifty thousand a year for, eh?" shouted Shiras. "Why doesn't he do something to earn his money?"

"This must have all happened since nine o'clock last night," said Graham. "I didn't see John this morning. Let's hear what Pepperill has to say. Get Mr. Pepperill for me!" he called out to Wallace Garvey through the door of the next office. "Sit down, nunkie. Have a chair, Wing." He took up the receiver. "That you,

Pepperill? How did they happen to get John on the grand jury? . . . Yes, I supposed so. . . . Nothing you can do? . . . What's the matter? . . . Well, keep an eye on it."

He hung up. Shiras ran his fingers through his beard.

"I'll bet you he makes a jackass of himself—of all of us! Come along, Wing, or all the fresh oysters will be gone. So long, Thornton. Tell John not to get too rambunctious! Glad I haven't got any confounded children! Hang it, what are you grinning at?"

John meantime was sitting in the centre of a half-circle of twenty-three New York business men in a large bare room with dirty windows on the top story of the Criminal Courts Building, listening to a disconnected story of human weakness and police venality. He had found on the grand jury several men whom he knew from the financial district, including Rufus Kayne, president of the Utopia Trust Company, and his own cousin Homer, the son of his great-half-uncle Levi. Evidently those higher up had intended the jury to have an uncontrollable Graham flavor. All these strangers seemed extremely friendly toward John, and also, it must be admitted, toward Homer. Apparently it meant something to be a Graham. Rufus Kayne had been unanimously chosen secretary, and John took his seat in the horseshoe of desks and looked around at the keen faces with some perturbation.

"You gentlemen will have to be easy on me," he apologized. "I've never acted as a presiding officer before."

"It will be all right, Mr. Graham!" Kayne assured him. "All you have to do is to swear the witness and let him tell his story. We'll help you in every way possible."

Then a committee was sent to inform the District



Attorney that the grand jury was duly organized and would be glad to have him instruct them as to the proper procedure; and almost immediately that official, in the person of the popular Mr. Howard Hartwell, breezed into the room. He was brisk, confident, exceedingly young, and astonishingly sophisticated, in spite of which he inspired John with confidence. Apparently he didn't believe anything he heard and only about ninety per cent of what he saw; and his introduction of old Keating, the star witness of the investigation, was a model of brevity.

"Gentlemen, here's the man who says this town can put it all over Sodom and Gomorrah. It's up to you to see if he's got the goods. If he has I'll draw any indictments you wish to find. If he hasn't—well, I suppose your time is valuable just as mine is! Send for me if you want me!"

So John, following a printed form, swore Mr. Keating to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and then let him ramble on in his own way. He proved a well-intentioned but vague and unsatisfactory witness, fanatically convinced of the righteousness of his cause, but relying for the most part on second-hand information for the truth of his assertions.

There followed a dozen police witnesses—inspectors, captains, detectives, matrons, turnkeys, and keepers from the Tombs and the penitentiary on Blackwell's Island—who were perfunctorily interrogated by a youthful assistant district attorney as to what they knew about any "crime wave" or "vice ring."

At the end of two hours John had reached the definite conclusion that probably the very best way not to find out about something was to inquire of those who didn't know.



"I don't see that we're getting very much light!" he remarked to Kayne.

The banker laughed.

"After all, it's their business, not ours!"

"Is it?" asked John in some surprise.

"Well, I mean it's up to them to furnish us the evidence," amended Kayne.

As he walked along the corridor after the grand jury's adjournment, John felt a touch on his elbow.

"How about some lunch?"

He was embarrassed and at the same time pleased. Hartwell was a refreshing novelty to him.

"Why, thanks! Certainly!"

"Come along with me to Pont's, then."

They descended the long flight of stone steps and crossed to Pontin's restaurant on Franklin Street, being incidentally photographed by a moving-picture man as they stepped off the curb.

"Oh, yes!" Hartwell had frankly acknowledged. "I knew he was waiting for us. There's no way of beating it. If they didn't get us going they'd get us coming! And what's the harm, at that? Of course, I can appreciate how a man in your position—but with me, why—to be honest—I like it! This is a funny game, Mr. Graham."

John already had an inkling to the same effect.

"Let me give you a tip!" Hartwell went on, as they lighted cigarettes during the hiatus after giving their order. "There isn't a move made in this business without something behind it. You couldn't arrest all the criminals in this town if you had a hundred thousand cops instead of ten thousand—which is all we've got. The Commissioner has to choose what sort of crime he'll go after. You can see where he gets off! Whether he

wants to or not, he's got to favor somebody. That's where politics steps in."

"How about this vice investigation?" inquired John.

Hartwell knocked his cigarette against the porcelain match-stand and pursed his lips.

"Part of the game," he replied. "But, as I said, that doesn't let anybody out. You see, there's *always* more or less crime in every city—usually more than less. Any day in any year a clever lawyer can turn up enough crime if the game is worked right and there's enough innuendo, to make the public believe that the Borough of Manhattan's a polluted cesspool of sin.

"It's just a question of where you throw the limelight. I think, between you and me, that this is a fairly clean old burg. As to this investigation of yours, it was started as a backfire to meet the charges of an anti-Tammany, highbrow, silk-stocking organization which, just because there's an election coming along, is willing to stand back of a bird who wants to pull a sensation and sell his stuff for big money to a magazine. He goes out and mingles with a few miscellaneous ladies of leisure who oblige him with all the fairy stories he'll pay for, and having written it all up to suit himself, instead of coming to me he sells it to *The Vortex* for five thousand dollars!"

"Do you think that's quite fair to Keating?" demanded John.

"Oh, probably not entirely!" agreed Hartwell readily enough. "I'm giving you the Tammany—our—my side. I've got to or my young and promising career would be blighted. Now I've done it, see?"

"So that's it!" remarked John with some irony.

"So that's that!" went on the youth lightly. "But it isn't all of it. Now I'm a member of the organization

and all that, but I'm moderately honest. Old Keating may be right. But—the reason they've called this grand jury is to prove that he's *wrong*—savvy? The insiders know that a vice campaign is always popular in this town. All the married men who sit at home evenings like to read about what they might be doing if they weren't good husbands and fathers. Well, this Keating stuff will have a big pull. They've got to meet it. That's where you come in. I guess you've got troubles enough of your own over this coal business, but that's not anybody else's funeral. They'll 'sick' John Graham on the white slave traffic and, if he says there isn't any, the public will believe him—and turn on Keating and the whole 'holier than thou' bunch and tear 'em in pieces."

"Which means?"

Hartwell gazed at him blandly.

"That it's a wise child that knows its own father," said he.

. . . . .

John returned to Wall Street to find his official distinction regarded in the light of a joke.

He was as much aghast at the newspaper notoriety given to the episode as he had been on the morning after his senior class day seven years before when he had first discovered his own "news value." *The Vortex*, a paper generally arrayed consistently upon the side of Satan, was for some unknown reason extravagantly eulogistic of what it called his unselfish devotion to the public interest. It prophesied that, assisted by its able staff of editors and the accurate and detailed information contained in its columns, John would make New York a better and sweeter place to live in.

Yet he could not understand why anybody should

care whether he served on that or any other grand jury. Was not such public service everyone's duty? Moreover he was treated, as the days went on, with an obsequiousness that frequently disgusted him. Throngs of loafers collected outside the building at noon to see him come out. Pontin's restaurant acquired a new popularity. Judges of the Sessions and Justices of the Supreme Court sitting in criminal term sought introductions to him there. With unblushing effrontery one old police magistrate asked him for a tip on coal stocks. And meantime the stream of policemen continued to file through the grand jury room, telling what they didn't know.

Then newspaper interest subsided, to be replaced with sensational headlines concerning labor trouble in the bituminous coal fields. The Mid-West had not as yet been affected, but adjacent properties had become scenes of increasing disorder. John had easily discovered Rhoda's whereabouts without having to track her further than Washington Mews, and the fact that his service upon the grand jury involved his keeping rather irregular hours, had enabled them to lunch and walk together on numerous occasions without exciting comment. The friendship was their own private affair, and something told him that it had better remain so. Hence, instead of his going to the Mews, Rhoda usually met him elsewhere by appointment, and as yet he had not even made the acquaintance of Miss Coutant, whom she was visiting. Cupid, having thus carefully watered the rosebud of love for something over six weeks, thereupon saw to it that the only thing necessary to cause it to burst into full bloom should occur, the removal of the adored one from John's immediate vicinity, owing to her brother Ranny being threatened with an operation for appendicitis at the Cambridge Hospital.

## CHAPTER X

### GREAT-UNCLE SHIRAS

GREAT-UNCLE SHIRAS had, meanwhile, taken a real liking to Raoul Degoutet. "He has guts!" the old fellow declared with his customary bluntness. "Devilish clever, that bust of Thornton! And I like his brass! I could have had some fun with him in the old days——"

Now that the clay had been moved to the studio in preparation for casting he'd go round there, take a squint at it, and maybe invite the little black imp out to dinner.

The mansion on the north side of Washington Square occupied by John's bachelor great-uncle was one of those classic edifices of red brick and gray stone trimmings erected in the ante-bellum period when fashion had drifted westward from Second Avenue and the vicinity of Tompkins Square toward Greenwich Village. They stand—those grand old houses—unchanged in their dignified simplicity, relics of an earlier, almost forgotten era which, while exteriorly pure, countenanced much that was astonishingly crude in both taste and morals. It was in sum an era of velvet collars and tobacco juice, of gilded mirrors, "what-nots" and cuspidors, of negro servants, whiskey, and outdoor plumbing.

Shiras's house was unaltered in every respect from the day it had been built. Like his grandfather, Mungo, it was big, high-ceilinged, roomy, and impressive. The sun streamed in through its tall windows all day long upon polished floors, Savonnerie rugs, and horrible walnut furniture upholstered in the green plush once eagerly purchased as an artistic novelty. There were



mirrors heavily framed in gilded carving everywhere, for mirrors in those days were what the alarm clock is to the savage of the Congo or the talking machine is to the farmer—the index of prosperity. The ground floor of Shiras's home was full of them.

But there was one room on the second story that bore not the remotest resemblance to what it had been in the days of Mungo, and that was the small library adjoining Shiras's bedroom. At first glance this room might have been taken for a museum, so full was it of Civil War relics. Over the fireplace hung an engraving of Abraham Lincoln, and beside it leaned an American flag. A small mortar stood in a corner, and a rack of arms was displayed upon one wall, the other being occupied by a bookcase beneath whose glass doors one could read the titles of many volumes all dealing with the Civil War.

In this room there was but one chair, a huge low chair with a sagging bottom, placed directly before the fire, where Shiras could sit and smoke and gaze upon his country's flag—the flag that he had not followed in battle. Herein lay the cancer of his life. That he had not volunteered, that when his draft number had come up in the mystic wheel at the recruiting office on July 11, 1862, he had not gone but had paid for a substitute—that was the one act for which he felt remorse. He was selfish, brutal, and profane; he had no belief in God and no regard for man. He had been ruthless and unscrupulous in business, he had played fast and loose with women, and his illegitimate offspring were scattered broadcast; but out of his highly developed acquisitive instinct had grown up a strange and somewhat perverted sense of loyalty; a mere loyalty of the gaming table it is true, the honor that is said to exist among thieves, that of "sticking" to one's fellows for good or ill,



the honor that, so often "rooted in dishonor," is yet honor of a sort—but carrying on and over in his case to something deeper, if not higher.

Shiras loved money and power, and so he respected the institutions which made him able to gratify that love. He loved food, wine, and women, his fine white linen, his broadcloth suits, his shining silver and glass, and the plot of ground in Washington Square upon which he lived. Therefore he valued his country and the Constitution which guaranteed to him his wine and his women, his house and his glassware; feeling toward the others of his class who enjoyed the same blessings somewhat as he would toward any board of directors with whom he was in friendly co-operation.

He had paid Sam Tinker, a young mechanic, six hundred dollars to take his chances for him, and as luck would have it, a minnie-ball had found Sam Tinker at Brandy Creek and had torn a hole through his heart and lungs. Ironically enough, Sam Tinker's diary had somehow found its way back to Shiras. It lay now in the bottom drawer of the bookcase. The last entry read: "*Wrote to mother. Bought a pint of milk from a little girl.*"

Shiras remembered the call Sam Tinker had made on him the night before the regiment left for Washington. He had been a gaunt, lackadaisical young fellow with a sense of humor—almost as marked as Shiras's sense of property—and they had joked over the whole thing, Tinker alleging jocularly that as he had intended to volunteer anyway Shiras's six hundred dollars was "pure velvet." Shiras had given him a Bible with a twenty-dollar bill tucked away in it and felt magnanimous until he learned of Tinker's death. From that moment the ghost of Sam Tinker haunted him waking and sleeping, for the diary showed plainly that he had not intended to volun-

teer at all, since he was entitled to exemption on account of a dependent widowed mother. But he had been out of work for a long time and needed the money. The diary also showed plainly what he thought of Shiras. Yet Shiras did not destroy the diary, but perused it over and over again.

Also he sought out Tinker's mother—a gray little old woman who lived with a canary in a tiny room on Morton Street. She bore him no ill will—on the contrary. "Sam, poor boy, would 'a' gone anyways," she said, dabbing her eyes. She was glad he'd gone for such a fine gentleman. She showed the gentleman a beautiful letter from the Colonel, a mere boy himself:

It gives me gratification to state, as I know it will you to know, that Color Sergeant Samuel Tinker died like a hero carrying his country's flag at Brandy Creek in the counter-charge at the brook. He was a soldier and a gentleman.

Shiras walked back home in the gathering dusk, asking himself whether what Tinker had called him in the diary was true. Later he bought the old lady a house and gave her an income of two thousand dollars a year for life. The Constitution guaranteed to every man life, liberty, and the right to pursue happiness; but because he and not Sam Tinker had had six hundred dollars, Sam Tinker was dead.

There was a girl to whom Shiras had been engaged. He had been in love with a great many, but this was not his usual sort—a young lady related to the Van Rensselaers and the Jays—families entertaining curious ideas about patriotism. When she heard about his hiring a substitute she refused to see him. It was a total surprise, a shock from which he never recovered. And it was the reason why he had never married.

As the years went on the shadow of Samuel Tinker did not grow less. Shiras began to feel that in effect he had murdered Tinker, and a morbid desire to know the details of the substitute's death led him to communicate with the Colonel. Tinker had been shot twice in the arm, but had staggered to his feet each time and gone on with the rest, shouting: "Come along, boys! I can carry the old rag yet!"

The shot that killed him had left his body hanging over a rail fence, the flag still clutched in his hand.

Alone in his big house with only Henri, his French valet, to keep him company, Shiras's mind revolved about Tinker and the manner of his departure from life. Once when he had to go to Washington he went down to Brandy Creek and got hold of an old codger who remembered the battle and took him around. Shiras imagined that he had found the exact spot. Later he went down there again and tried to find the little girl who had sold Tinker the pint of milk. For a whole day he drove from farmhouse to farmhouse inquiring: "Is there any lady here who remembers selling a pint of milk to a Union soldier the day before the battle of Brandy Creek?" He began to buy maps and books, particularly in regard to the Wilderness campaign. In time the war became an actual obsession with him. He joined historical societies and attended auctions of war relics.

Now, after more than sixty years, he had almost convinced himself that he had been in it—"only toward the end, you know," he used to say, and for the past three years he had put on a uniform and attended the annual banquet of the survivors of the regiment to which Sam Tinker had belonged. As his arteries began to thicken, he occasionally suffered from delusions owing to the in-

creased blood pressure, and these delusions always related to the war. "I can carry the old flag yet!" he would say, looking up at it from his chair.

These phases, however, occurred but rarely, and then only after some fit of overindulgence. At such times Henri treated him almost like a baby, but rest and care would put him back on his feet again as noisy and arrogant as ever.

The idea of looking up Degoutet had come to him one afternoon about half-past four—the hour when he was apt to begin to get a bit restless. He balanced it cautiously against his club, the Corner Store, the "movies," and a possible call on some woman. But the club was away uptown, and he had let his motor go for the afternoon; the "movies" were dull if you went to them by yourself; and he felt that it would be a bore to dress, his invariable practice when making a visit. He stood by the bay window of his great drawing-room, looking out into the square. There was a spring "lift" in the air. His nephew Thornton had invited him to join them on their annual spring trip to Holliday Cove, the Grahams' Adirondack camp, but he felt too shaky. He was too old for fried food and those damn camp cots. No, thank you! Yet now he almost wished that he were going. There was no one for him to play with. Then Degoutet had come into his mind.

"Hanged if I won't look the rascal up!" he said to himself.

He felt in his pocket for the little red book in which he had noted a multitude of questionable addresses and surreptitious telephone numbers, but Degoutet's name was not there. With some difficulty he found it in the telephone directory and was surprised and pleased to discover that the sculptor's studio was in the "Mews"

directly behind his own house, and less than fifty yards away, in the old remodelled stable belonging to himself.

The property, bought by Mungo Graham in 1847, had originally extended all the way to Eighth Street. Ezra being then twenty-two years of age, and fond of horse-flesh, his father had built in the rear of the mansion a stable of stone-trimmed brick with twelve stalls and living quarters overhead for the coachman's family—very comfortable. But Ezra, after his marriage, had preferred living uptown on Park Avenue, and on Mungo's death it had all fallen to Shiras, much to his secret gratification, although he was always grumbling to the rest of the family about the "old ruin." Thereafter the horses disappeared and the stable *qua* stable ceased to have any official existence, albeit the upper windows were often lighted. Walls and outhouses multiplied, the alley became a street of studios, and there was no longer any visible relationship between house and stable, the disassociation being made the more complete by a long lease running between Shiras and a certain Emmanuele Papillo, whereby the party of the first part reserved to himself the use and occupancy of the top story, which could be reached through the back yard of the house by a private passage with an entrance of its own.

The coincidence that Degoutet was in a sense a kind of tenant tickled Shiras's fancy and increased his feeling of friendliness. He foresaw an intimacy replete with possibilities. Between them the entire stable was available. These Bohemian chaps always ran with a gay crew. It gave him an odd feeling to be going to the front entrance on the alley, although he had not used the upper story since September—it was cold there in the winter.



He was about to ring the bell when the door opened and his grandniece Ditty nearly ran him down. She was scowling and for an instant did not recognize him.

"Well, flapper," he yelled at her, "what y' doing here?"

The girl flushed dark red.

"Oh, hello, nunkie! I came to see father's bust!"

"Pish-posh! Couldn't you see enough of that at home?"

Her eyes glinted.

"I've just as much right to come here to see my father's bust as you have!" she flared.

"That's right. Eat me alive!" he laughed.

She hesitated before turning.

"Nunkie! Don't tell anybody you saw me here! Promise?"

"Stick together, eh?"

"You bet!"

"All right," he said. "You and I'll have some times yet! But don't let me meet you here again—it isn't *comme il faut*."

She flicked him a kiss and ran down the alley, around the corner. Old Shiras waited three minutes by his watch and, then disdaining the bell, knocked loudly with his cane. Almost immediately Raoul, in his smock, opened the door.

"I've just discovered we're neighbors, Degoutet!" Shiras said. "I live right behind you—dropped in for a look at the great work."

"Glad to see you! *Entrez!*"

Degoutet, entirely at ease, bowed him in and shut the door. The bust stood in the centre of the room, where the sculptor had been putting the last touches on it.

Shiras eyed it critically.



"It's Thornton, all right—to the life! Congratulations!"

"I've just shooed out your grandniece," casually remarked the sculptor, obviously to forestall inquiry.

"What did she want?"

"I don't know. Probably she didn't, either! 'Young lady!' I told her, 'you can smoke just one cigarette and then beat it back to mama!'"

"H'm!" answered Shiras winking. "Wise youth! Don't suppose you let 'em all go like that, do you?"

"All the brunettes!" replied Degoutet.

"*Ma petite blonde,*" hummed the old man. "Now dark women are the only ones I like! Oh, those Spanish girls! I bet you know something about 'em, eh?"

Degoutet, sitting sideways on a near-by table, poked him in the ribs with the toe of his shoe.

"You've forgotten more than I ever knew, grandpa!"

Shiras chuckled.

"I suppose you go to a lot of snappy parties—eh, Degoutet? I know what you artist fellows are! I get lonely every now and then for a little male companionship. You'll have to take pity on me."

Degoutet swung free of the table.

"I will!" he grinned. "What'll you have?"

"I didn't mean that!" continued Shiras. "But I'll have a nip of Scotch if it's handy. I was referring to the need of friendship. When a fellow's got as much money as I have he can't trust anybody.—That's good Scotch!—Look here! How about coming over to dine with me—eh? Thornton hasn't got the only wine cellar in New York! I've got some *Krug* ninety-eight that's praying for deliverance! How about it?"

Degoutet glanced at his wrist watch.

"You're a wicked old man!" he stated emphatically.

"And I'll be glad to! I may run off and leave you afterward."

"You're not the only one!" replied Shiras jauntily. "I may wander out for a while myself."

It was at this instant that the bell buzzed and Degoutet swung himself to his feet and went to the door.

"Two of those brunettes!" he whispered over his shoulder as he threw it open with a flourish. "Welcome, ladies! Will you walk into my parlor?" He dropped his voice. "I've got a spider waiting for you!"

Old Shiras lumbered out of his chair and stood punctiliously as two young ladies entered.

"Permit me to introduce Mr. Shiras Graham," said Degoutet. "My colleague Miss Coutant—Miss McLane!"

The old man bowed courteously. A dashing pair of fillies! He was already playing in luck.

"Miss McLane," he smiled, addressing the smaller and more slender of the two, "are you perhaps related to my old friend, Randolph McLane?"

"Randolph McLane is my father," she answered. "I've often heard him speak of you, Mr. Graham. You were in Birmingham together, weren't you? And I know your grandnephew John. His brother Thornton is a classmate of my brother's at Harvard."

"Lord bless me! We're old friends!"

"And you, Miss Coutant, are a confrère of my friend Degoutet?" he said to the other girl, who returned his glance with none of her friend's diffidence. "I've always wished I'd gone in for art!"

He had already decided that he would make up in every possible way for not having done so before.

"Yes—I've a studio a few steps down the alley. Miss McLane is staying with me."

She was a big, stalwart girl, full lipped, deep bosomed, with a touch of insolence in her carriage, an independent way of holding her head. The old man's blood quickened. A real woman! A gypsy! A regular Valkyrie!

"We're neighbors. Degoutet must bring me to see your work. I'm thinking of having somebody do my bust. Raoul"—he'd never used the sculptor's first name before—"is such a robber I daren't have him. Anyhow, a man is never as sympathetic——"

She gave him a queer look.

"Do you think you'd be so sympathetic to me, then?" she asked with a certain slow impudence that tickled him.

"We'd get along," he said. "Look here, my dears. We're all friends—and neighbors! Degoutet has just promised to dine with me. I live just around the corner on Washington Square. Won't you do me the honor to join us?"

Already his imagination was fired at the thought of the dinner party. He'd show them how it should be done!

Cecily glanced across at Rhoda, who was examining the bust with Degoutet.

"Mr. Graham is asking us to dine with him."

She had already heard a full account of her friend's meeting with this courtly old gentleman's grandnephew.

"How jolly! I'd like nothing better!" answered Rhoda.

## CHAPTER XI

### WASHINGTON MEWS

ON the same afternoon, while walking up-town on his way home, it similarly occurred to John to stop in at Degoutet's. His father had only been waiting to get through the sittings before taking a short rest and, the grand jury having adjourned for a week, the start for the Adirondacks had been planned for the next evening. John had not seen Rhoda for ten days and had heard nothing from her, but Thorny had written from Cambridge that Ranny was all right again and still possessed of his appendix, that his sister was "a peach" and that he had "fallen hard" for her. This did not increase John's happiness. Rhoda was still nothing but a girl, and it would, he realized with some anxiety, be easy for her to become interested in some one else. He had been a fool to let her get away from him uncommitted! Now, although he knew that she was not there, he felt irresistibly drawn toward the place of her abode.

He had often played in his great-uncle Shiras's stable when a little boy—and he was amused to find himself knocking on the very door that in his childhood days had opened upon such wonderful varnished stalls decorated with bundles of straw tied neatly with blue ribbons, racing buggies with scarlet wheels, oak-framed lithographs of coaching adventures, blacksmithy and stable scenes, and of Robert Bonner with fuzzy whiskers driving "Maud S." How vividly he could recall the pungent smell of am-

monia and of old Jake's black pipe! The same place, the same door.

"Oh, hello! Come on in!" said Degoutet, answering his ring. "I've got a couple of visitors, but I guess you won't object."

He closed the door and pulled his guest into the studio. It was already approaching dusk, and at first John saw only the grayish blotch made by the bust.

"Miss Coutant, let me present Mr. Graham."

John found himself bowing to a tall young woman whose dark complexion the fading north light turned darker still. Something about the face, the almost perfect oval slightly marred by the heaviness of the firmly pointed chin, for an instant suggested Ditty to him. Then the blood swept upward to his own forehead.

"How do you do—*John!*"

From the shadow behind the modelling stand a small hand thrust itself forward.

"Why hello, Rhoda!"

"Oh, you know each other!"

Degoutet was regarding them whimsically.

"Lord, yes! Years!" answered John, striving to appear indifferent. "We used to play together when we were kids on Mount Desert."

"Everybody in the world's been here this afternoon. How do you like that chin, Cecily?"

Miss Coutant strolled over to the modelling stand and eyed the family feature critically. John turned swiftly to Rhoda.

"I had no idea you'd come back! Why didn't you let me know?"

"I only arrived this morning!"

"How is your brother?"

"Ranny's all right. I don't think he had appendi-

citis at all. I left him doing tail dives over Soldiers' Field in his new monoplane."

John hardly knew what she was saying, so occupied was he with the pleasure of having her back once more.

"I do hope you are not going away again!" he said fervently.

"But I am!" she informed him. "I'm off for West Virginia to work among the tent colonies."

"Whereabouts?"

"To Bitumen."

He frowned.

"I wouldn't go there; it's dangerous."

"That's exactly why I want to go there," she answered.

He might have known it. He knew her ideas, but he had never really taken her seriously. He had somehow assumed that he was going to have her right there with him all the time. It rather hurt his vanity that she could cut the tie so easily. Yet, after all, why shouldn't she? They were merely friends.

"Besides—I've got to do *something!*" she added inconsequently.

He was on the point of making a most pertinent suggestion in that regard when the bell buzzed and Dr. Erasmus Dominick came in with Winthrop Emerson. They were there, it appeared, because the plaster was to be cast next day and this was the last chance to see the bust in the clay.

"Hello, John!"

"How are you, doctor! Hello, Winty!"

"Miss McLane—Miss Coutant—Doctor Dominick and Doctor Emerson."

They shook hands and turned to examine the bust. All agreed that it was the sculptor's masterpiece.



"It's your father—absolutely!"

Doctor Dominick was enthusiastic.

"You ought to let us have it for the Institute! I congratulate you, Degoutet!"

The sculptor gave a loud yawp.

"I might convert you to the arts yet—eh, Doc?"

John was shocked at such familiarity. Imagine any one addressing the distinguished Doctor Dominick of the National Institute as "Doc"! But the "Doc" did not show any like umbrage.

"You don't need to, my dear fellow! You're worth a dozen of us mere 'docs'!"

Degoutet threw an arm about the slender figure.

"Ba-ah! Of course I'm for art and all that, but for a real man and real work give me old Doctor Dominick!"

"Right!" echoed Emerson. "Hitch your trolley to him and you can forget all about Dun and Bradstreet!"

John had felt this for a long time. The more he became familiar with the marvelous work of the research organization, the more he realized that this gentle and almost saintly man was perhaps the most valuable person in the world. Yet the strange part of it all was that Erasmus Dominick himself, the generalissimo of the forces contending against the armies of disease and vice and poverty, saw nothing beyond, or claimed, at least, that he did not. The most spiritual of men, he denied the existence of the spiritual in the ordinarily accepted sense, attributing to what he called a "tro-phism" every emotion of the human heart. His the passion of pure science:

"There is no world beyond this curtain drop.

Prove me another! Let the dreamers dream

Of their faint gleams, and noises from within,

And higher and lower; life is life enough."

Unmarried, self-effacing, hardly known outside a limited circle, this celebrated scientist gave himself utterly to the service of humanity. For years he had been studying infantile paralysis, and his purely professional interest in Toto had developed into a very tender affection for her—a “trophism,” as he would have asserted. Voluntarily he had undertaken the direction of her treatment—without perceptible result.

“I must be going!” said Emerson. “Coming my way, Jacko?”

John glanced at Rhoda.

“I’m going to hang on a while,” he answered. “Are you coming up to the camp with us to-morrow?”

Emerson shook his head.

“Can’t! Got to watch a darned old mess I’ve just stuck into a glass bottle. I have to nurse it every half-hour.”

“Nights too?”

Emerson nodded. “Until it can feed itself,” he laughed.

The party broke up. John waited until the others had gone and then sauntered down the alley with Rhoda toward her friend’s studio.

“I know something much better for you to do than going out to Bitumen!” said he. “Stay here and become Mrs. John Graham.”

“Thank you!” she said, with a sidelong glance. “It’s a nicer name than the one I have now, but—no! that is not an acceptance!”—her face became serious. “Of course it would be silly of me not to admit that I had thought of such a possibility, but how could I marry you, John?”

“I don’t see why you couldn’t marry me as well as anybody else!” he declared reaching for her hand. She drew it away.

"Because I'm opposed to everything you stand for—the capitalistic system—wealth—it's an insuperable obstacle."

"But I'm not responsible for the system."

"You're a part of it—a very important part, too. If I should marry you—why, it would mean abandoning all my principles! Unless——"

"Unless?" he repeated eagerly.

"Unless you ceased to be a part of it. Of course you could always do that, by giving up your wealth just as Christ told the rich young man in the Bible to do—'Sell all and give it to the poor.'"

"Christ couldn't have meant that literally!" he protested.

"I think he did," she asserted. "Christ undoubtedly was a socialist. There is no reason I can see for questioning his meaning. He wanted us to give not only our possessions but ourselves. What a splendid thing it would be if you did exactly that—divest yourself of your possessions and live among your men!"

"Like an Upton Sinclair hero?" he asked. "You don't really mean that, do you, Rhoda? It seems to me that I have opportunities greater than those of a settlement worker—and greater responsibilities, too!"

"You have!" she answered. "But they grow out of the fact that you have profited unjustly by a system that seems to me both wrong and cruel. Not that you're cruel, John. I know you're not. But think how wonderful it would be in this materialistic age to follow out Christ's injunction literally and give yourself to a life of service!"

"With you?"

"Perhaps with me,—perhaps with some one better."

"Oh, Rhoda!" he cried. "It would be wonderful with you!"

"But"—and she shook her head sadly, "you won't, the system's too strong for you! You're the product of it. You're much too honest to say you don't believe in it."

He thought for a moment.

"What you say is quite true, Rhoda. But why should a mere difference of opinion upon a question of that sort separate us? Even if you don't believe in private ownership you must admit that we're doing the very best we can to right the wrongs that may be inherent in it. My father has given over half his fortune already to the Graham Foundation. You know what magnificent work it has done all over the world."

She laid her hand on his arm.

"Yes, but John, dear! You can't starve one man's soul and pay for it by filling another man's dinner pail! Don't think me too horrid for saying this! But building a hospital in Java doesn't compensate for abuses in the coal fields! A large part of the money given away by your father's philanthropic experts comes out of the miners in Bitumen County—where thousands have been turned out of their jobs for joining the union and are starving in tent colonies with their wives and families. I don't know much about the Mid-West properties, John, but I do know some of the general conditions prevailing in West Virginia.

"Why, the mortality among the babies in some districts is forty per cent. Can you blame the men for wanting their own doctors? Then they aren't paid in cash but are forced instead to take 'scrip' good only at the company's stores, where they're charged from twenty to fifty per cent over market prices. They're compelled to lay tracks to their headings, to remove dirt, slate, and rubbish, to put in timbers to support the roofs

of the galleries—what they call ‘dead work’—without payment. They have to accept the figures chalked up by the company’s weighmen as the cars are run in to the tipples on scales they are not permitted to see. Worst of all, they can’t complain of violations of the safety laws. What good are such laws, if they’re not enforced? Do you know, John, how many miners were killed last year? Twenty-one hundred! In ten years twenty-four thousand coal miners have died in order that the country might be supplied with coal. And the death-rate here is three times what it is in England. That means neglect somewhere. To refuse even to listen to the men or discuss things with them seems criminal!”

John had turned color.

“If those things are actually so, Rhoda,” he replied; “if where the law is being violated and men’s lives endangered—or they have any just ground for complaint, for that matter—they are not allowed to present their grievances, I agree with you that the situation is intolerable and should be remedied.”

“Until it is, there’s no use building colleges,” she interjected.

He winced.

“I don’t think you have any right to assume that what you say is true of any of our properties!” he declared. “I understand that the living conditions at Graham City are the best to be found anywhere.”

“But your coal company refuses to treat with the men collectively!”

“That is a question of industrial policy, Rhoda. I confess I’m not up on such things. But business—and philanthropy, too, for that matter—has got to be conducted according to the laws of economics. You can’t just be sentimental about it.”



There was a touch of resentment in his voice.

"That is the trouble,—it's all so cold and scientific! That's what I'd like to have you get away from, John—forget that your company had to make dividends out of the men and try to enrich their lives instead. If you can't do that and retain your interest as a mine owner give up your ownership and do it as an individual."

He shook his head.

"I'm sorry, Rhoda. I don't follow you there. You can't run a business like a charity."

"But you can run a charity like a business!" she retorted. "This scientific philanthropy doesn't appeal to me much. I've sometimes wondered whether it wouldn't be better to be a little less efficient in one's giving and not try to make it pay such big dividends. It seems to me more harm may come from stifling a generous impulse than from gratifying it unwisely."

"Surely you wouldn't have the money wasted!" he exclaimed.

"Once in a while I would!" she answered. "It all comes back to the fact that the capitalist should not have the money to give away. His prosperity as owner of a business should be shared directly with those concerned in creating it, instead of making them contribute involuntarily to his pet charities."

"How bitterly you feel about it, Rhoda!" he commented.

"I can't help it, John! It goes to the very root of things. These great accumulations of swollen profits should not be permitted. Even your philanthropic Foundations seem to me to have an objectionable side to them, for the very perpetuation of such a great hoard of money, which came in the first instance from the toil of thousands of workers, gives a kind of public approval



to the way in which it was amassed—a sort of official absolution. It's bound to make for the upholding of capitalism. Do you realize, John, that in the city of New York alone there are 'Foundations' with a combined endowment amounting to over half a billion dollars?"

The thought was new to him and he was rather staggered by it. In fact he was generally staggered by her lucidity and vehemence. It had never occurred to him that she felt so strongly on these matters. But what particle of difference did it really make? He had never loved her so much as now. They had reached Miss Coutant's studio and had stepped inside the narrow hallway leading to the door. He took her by both arms.

"You're a grand little talker, Rhoda! And there may be a lot in what you say—but I don't have to agree with you to have you love me, do I?"

She regarded him fearlessly.

"I'm afraid so. These things are really a part of my life, John. Nobody could find any happiness with me unless he shared my views—he really couldn't!"

"But suppose I'm too much of a dumb-bell to have any! Can't you have pity on a poor ignoramus who only knows he loves you?"

Her eyes softened.

"You're such a dear boy, John! Don't make it so hard for me!"

"Marry me, Rhoda! I love you! What more do you want?"

He saw the tears glistening on her lower lids.

"Love isn't everything. We owe a duty to others. I couldn't fulfil it merely by helping you give away your money. Think of the millions of people——"

"Then you *do* love me!"

She closed her eyes and turned her face from him.

"It's no use!" she said. "I mustn't marry you. It would be deserting my colors. You believe one thing and I believe another. One of us would destroy the other. We must be true to ourselves!"

"It's like the old fairy-story where the Water King's son couldn't marry the Fire King's daughter, because either she would dry him up or he would put her out!" he asserted. "I won't let you dry me up, Rhoda! And I promise not to put you out!"

She smiled through her tears.

"I wouldn't let you put me out, John!"

"But, Rhoda! I can't let you go like this!" he cried in desperation. "We love each other! I don't know really what I believe. Give me time and maybe I'll think as you do. You owe me that chance—and don't you owe it to yourself, dear?"

She stood irresolute, her mind confused, her heart beating tumultuously. She loved him. She did not doubt his love. Yet if she yielded to his plea would it not mean absolute surrender in the end? She could not decide. She would wait. She raised her eyes to his.

"Kiss me—just once," she said. "Good-by!"

He took her in his arms and she yielded to his embrace limply. But he did not stop at one kiss.

"I'll never give you up—never!" he declared. "You're what I care for most in the world!"

Her arms crept around his neck and her lips sought his. Seconds uncoiled themselves into hours. A step sounded on the cobbles outside and they drew apart. A florist's boy carrying a large box pressed the bell and came into the entry.

"Coutant?" he chirped.

Cecily opened the door. They watched self-con-

sciously while she untied the string and lifted the cover. The box was full of orchids. An envelope containing a card nestled among the wet leaves. Miss Coutant opened it and held the card to the light.

“I thought so!” she remarked. “Great-uncle Shiras!”

## CHAPTER XII

### SHATTERED SOLITUDE

THE sun was not yet up and the mist hung like a muslin curtain along the edge of the lake. The only evidence of life was the gray smoke that curled up into the colorless sky from the chimney in the grove. The silence was like a crystal, magnifying the intermittent noises from the cook-house—where Mrs. Bevin was getting breakfast—into the thunder of a bowling alley, so that her seventeen-year-old Lucie down on the shore wondered that the minnows suspended in the invisible water were not jarred into fright.

‘ Ta petite sœur a de gros yeux,  
‘Pop’ go ze weasel!’

Her mother’s voice rose and fell, now hardly audible, now almost a bellow, as she moved about the shanty.

Lucie, rod in hand, shoved her canoe into the water and stepped in. It was only a hundred yards or so to the edge of the lily-pads, where one could always catch enough trout for breakfast in a few minutes, and occasionally “*une belle*”—two or more pounds of elastic, rainbow-hued steel. She sat amidships, her bare brown legs crossed on the bottom, her eyes drowsy and lowering, her slight body drooping forward, and gave the paddle a strong push into the sand. With a trickly sound the canoe glided toward the fringe of reeds. Lucie yawned, loosened a few yards of line, and cast into the blue-black space between the red stems and the first small pads. Twice she dragged the hackle across the

open water without result, but at the third cast it did not even reach the surface. A flash of silver leaped like a dynamic spark to meet it in mid-air. The girl's face was now all alert, her eyes shining, her lips compressed. The trout darted away from the lily-pads—then ripped the water in a circle. She did not play him. He was hooked solidly by the tongue, and after his first rush she reeled him in and lifted him with her net into the canoe.

"One! There, you!" she said, knocking the trout's head against the gunwale. Then she cast again. Each time she cast she landed another, until soon a dozen iridescent trout lay palpitating in the bow of the canoe.

The mist had lifted and grown luminous. Suddenly through a pine-top on the eastern shore a glittering golden spear shot across the lake. The forest blazed, the water turned to purple. The world leaped into color.

Paddling quickly ashore the girl drew the canoe up on the beach and stripped—a simple process. There was no human being except her mother within twelve miles, for old Tom, her grandfather, had gone down to the junction the night before to sleep in the caboose on the siding.

With supple grace the girl stepped out of the little pile of clothes about her feet and lifted her arms above her head. Straight and trim as a young spruce, lithe as a cheetah, she was a perfectly created thing, to run, to climb, to swim, to paddle, to live in freedom. The sun lighted up the glowing white skin of her trunk, the quick play of muscle in the beautifully formed legs and thighs, the graceful slope of the shoulders, the set of the head and the lift of the chin, as she stepped toward the water. She might have been a Galatea, had it not been that in contrast with the white marble of her breast her face, arms, and legs were tanned like an Indian's.

She dropped her arms and plunged into the lake. With a few strokes she reached an anchored skiff, climbed aboard, and balancing for an instant on one of the thwarts, dove in a glittering parabola. Coming up twenty feet inshore, she shook the water from her eyes, found bottom, and waded to the shingle. Her mother watched her complacently from the cook-house.

"Coffee nearly ready!" she called.

"I'm coming!" answered Lucie, wiping herself off with her chemise, which she thereupon slipped on over her head. Then, having got into her dress—she cleaned the fish, tossing them into a small creel which she slung over her shoulder, and strolled up toward the grove. Like her grandfather and father, she was tall and walked with a swing not without arrogance.

"How many?" asked her mother.

"A dozen—that'll be plenty!"

Mrs. Bevin, a short, dark, bustling woman with a suggestion of blue mustache, poured the trout upon a platter.

"Tiens! May-be. But Mr. Graham, he always eat three. Ah! *Ces sont belles!* Mr. Graham, three, Madame Graham, one leetle, Miss Toto, one, Miss Dittee, three, Mr. Johnny, four—that make—*combien?*"

She went all over it again—on the fingers of her left hand.

"That make twelve. *Suffit!*"

"Maybe they'll have had breakfast on the car—the *Diana!*" suggested Lucie.

"No, Mr. Graham he like the fresh fish. We must be ready," replied Mrs. Bevin, rolling the trout in flour and laying them carefully in a row ready for frying. She placed two cups on the table and filled them with coffee, removed a sheet of "raised biscuits" from the oven and a half-empty glass of jam from the cupboard.



"Come on, get it!" she said, showing her teeth in a smile.

She was a comely woman of thirty-eight—French-Canadian, a Laurier from Ste. Anne de Balbec. Lucie had inherited her warm, dusky coloring, ripe lips, and snapping eyes along with the Bevin bone structure. Winters they spent in Saranac and economized. In summer all supplies were charged to the camp expense account, so they were well fed—a whole dollar a day apiece.

"Holiday Cove" was the Graham refuge. Thornton, shortly after his return from the West, feeling the need of some means of escape from business, had purchased twenty thousand acres of Adirondack lake and forest and built a camp in the middle of it, twelve miles from the nearest wagon road or railroad. At first he had made it his practice to disappear into its isolation only for a week or two each spring and autumn, "toting" in over the trail the entire distance; but as time went on he had added a narrow gauge railroad from what was called "Graham Junction" to Holiday Lake, and the trips became more and more frequent.

To the rails had been fitted the wheel rims of several motors—including a sort of movable platform, made with a collapsible top—in order to transfer Toto in her chair directly from the private car to the camp. The track ran to the back of the grove, where a plank platform or ramp allowed her chair to be pushed to the bungalow. This rolling stock—consolidated or individually—was known to the family as "The Graham Special." The only way a stranger could violate the camp's privacy was by a twelve-mile walk along the ties, and as yet no one had ever intruded.

Thornton had installed old Tom Bevin, now a partially

deaf but otherwise vigorous septuagenarian, as chief warden and ranger; his son Charles and his Canadian wife as caretakers. Mrs. Bevin, assisted by Lucie, did the cooking, for the Grahams brought no servants, each member of the family doing a part of the work of the camp—this last a practical necessity since the death of Charles from typhoid five years before. The Grahams regarded the Bevins less as retainers than as part of their own family, and the loss of Charles had been a blow to all of them.

Their particular concern was Lucie's immediate future, for while she was as yet intellectually a child, her beauty was startling and dramatic. There are some women who cannot take the most careless pose without unconsciously emphasizing their sex, and Lucie was one of these. She was shy, yet confiding; innocently fond of boys; ignorant of the ways of the world. She had never seen a street car, a circus, or an elevator. She liked to look at the advertisements in the backs of magazines, particularly those of the jewelry offered for sale upon the instalment plan. Her only personal adornment was a little gold-plated cross given her by her grandfather at her first communion. She always wore it.

Yet in spite of an almost incredible ignorance of actual life, she was a mature student of the shadow world, an intimate of those who live and move upon the silver screen. Three times every week all winter long she watched Pola Negri, Norma Talmadge, Lillian Gish, or Gloria Swanson with the same concentration with which her grandfather would have stalked a deer. She knew—or thought that she knew—just what young ladies wore in every emergency and what they did when dashing Arab chieftains or mounted "bad men" swung them across their saddle-bows. She knew all about the

private life of every "star." There was no adventure in the world of the imagination that she had not experienced; no vicarious emotion that had not been hers.

"They're coming!" she now cried suddenly. "I can hear the horn! Listen! Don't you hear it?"

Mrs. Bevin shook her head.

"My ears no good!"

Presently, however, the sound of the Gabriel was clearly audible through the trees, and in a moment or two Thornton Graham's big touring car rolled in, the banker at the wheel with old Tom beside him. In the rear seat were Ditty and John. Close behind came the "float" with Toto and Mrs. Graham.

"Hello! Hello!" shouted Thornton, grabbing a hand of both Mrs. Bevin and Lucie. "How fine you're looking, Mrs. Bevin! Lucie—by George, you're as pretty as a movie actress! How have you been all winter? Well, we are glad to be back! Got some trout for breakfast?"

"I hope you had a good trip?" hazarded Mrs. Bevin, while Ditty kissed Lucie warmly and then ran with her to see that Toto got safely off the float on to the platform. It had been a difficult achievement to make possible her safe transportation from New York to the camp, but Toto had always loved Holiday Cove so passionately that her father had resolved that it should be done at any cost.

Now with John behind her chair she headed the little procession for the bungalow; Lucie had run on ahead to put the trout on the stove, followed by Ditty, who liked to fuss with cooking so long as she didn't have to wash the dishes; and old Tom was backing the two motors into the covered shed, euphemistically known as the "garidge," down in the clearing by the truck patch.

It was the instant when the beams of the sun are like golden lances in rest; the water deep blue; the hillsides alive with their tenderest colors. Here and there the shad-blow shone like snow fallen overnight along the ridges. On the edge of the lake the aspens and swamp maples made a border of pale green touched with red. A motionless world of beauty—seemingly irrefrangible!

Thornton Graham stood with his arm around his wife.

"Wonderful, isn't it? I'd give anything to stay here with you all, but there's no way out of that confounded directors' meeting to-morrow, and I've got to go back to-night. The coal situation worries me sick!"

Mrs. Graham patted his arm.

"It's a shame, dear! Can't you come back to-morrow night and stay over the week-end?"

"I'm going to try," he answered. "With luck I may be able to make it. By the way, have you noticed Lucie?"

"Isn't she pretty?"

Thornton glanced down at his wife.

"She is indeed. Much too pretty! What do you think about having a twenty-year-old romantic college boy like Thorny playing around here for weeks this summer?"

"Lucie is a good girl—a perfect dear!"

"Of course she is. But suppose Thorny took it into his head to fall in love with her? It's done, you know!"

"I believe you're right, Thornton!" she admitted. "I see just what you mean. She's grown—is different somehow. Perhaps we'd better send Thorny out West."

At that moment Lucie herself appeared at the door of the cook-house, adjoining the mess hall.

"Breakfast!" she called, making a megaphone of her hands. Then, seeing that they had heard her, she dropped her arms and smiled.

"By George!" muttered Thornton Graham under his breath. "Yes, I think we had better send him out West!"

Mrs. Graham studied his face as they strolled side by side up the ramp.

"You look very tired, Thornton."

"I am," he answered. "That night on the train would make anybody look a hundred. Curse these private cars! Always hooked on to the end of a local! Or shunted all round the yard! Do you know that we could have got here in six hours on the express? As it was, on the *Diana* we took eleven! One of the plutocrat's privileges that he could easily get along without!"

"But then we couldn't have brought Tots!"

"True!"

His eyes softened.

"You ought to take a vacation, Thornton."

"Ought! Offer me the chance! I'd give ten thousand dollars cash for just one week—poking round the lake—snoozing on the pine needles—no telephone! I wonder, Jean, if old Tom doesn't get more out of life than I do."

Jean Graham wove her fingers into those of her husband's right hand. "Of course not! And think of the good you do!"

He grunted.

"I wish some other fellow could do it for a while! And let me rest!"

"Nobody else could!" she declared. "But some day—when all the Foundations are working smoothly and there aren't any more labor troubles——"

"And the millennium has at last arrived!"

"We'll buy a second-hand flivver for you to tinker

with, and put a few things in a suit-case and disappear for—a whole year!”

“That’s what!” he agreed heartily. “Well, I’m going to have a whole day right now! Hi there, Lucie! What have you got for breakfast?”

Yet when they sat down he ate little and drank only half a cup of coffee.



## CHAPTER XIII

### MONADS

THE sunlight was blatant. Toto's chair had been pushed into the shade of two great pines on the knoll above the lake, and Mrs. Graham was reading "Framley Parsonage" aloud to her. Thornton and John, having exchanged their city clothes for tattered khaki shooting suits, strolled down to the boat-house, in which lay a decrepit two-cylinder motor launch—also the *Diana*, referred to more familiarly as the "*Di*"—which had never been known to start in less than an hour after priming and had the habit of suddenly stopping in mid-lake, usually several miles from camp. Thornton Graham had never yet surrendered to its eccentricities, and invariably the first thing that he did after arriving in camp was to try to start the *Di*. He always succeeded eventually in doing so—sometimes in an hour or two, sometimes in a day, and once he had spent nearly an entire week, taking the engine down and strewing the beach with parts, which in the end, after many attempts, he had reassembled. It had become a ritual; and now, as a matter of course, father and son shoved the weather-worn old craft into the water and poled it with an oar out to the float.

From the grove came the low murmur of his wife's voice punctuated by intermittent bangings from the cook-house; from the truck patch rose the distant "Ha-a-ar! Ha-a-ar!" of a solitary crow; otherwise the lake was still, save for the uproar he made himself when

he moved his feet and for the pounding of his own heart.

He and John seemed to be sitting there as in a crystal sphere—a transcendental diving-bell, lowered from infinity. The air was of the body temperature. The thin, transparent water had no surface. The sense of touch alone had objectivity. The sun burned him between the shoulder-blades. It was good! Every muscle, every nerve in his big body cried for rest. A weariness that was weakness dragged at his jaw, his shoulders, the pouches beneath his eyes. Yet each instant under the radioactive sunlight he felt his strength returning. From the clear sky, from the limpid surface of the lake, from the balsams along the shore, mysterious and revivifying elements mingled together and renewed his vigor and refreshed his soul. If he could have only a week—a succession of seven such days! More time with this boy of his—that other self! He had so much to impart to him, so much to warn him against! In his weakened condition the love that poured out from him to this blue-eyed, strong-chinned, smiling youth in the soiled khaki breeches opposite brought the tears to his eyes. Part of him! But part of Jean, too! Would he ever have time to teach the boy to feel the depth of that love?

“Where’s the kerosene?” he asked.

John reached behind him and handed his father an oil-can used for priming. The noise reverberated along the water. Silence fell again. John stretched his arms upward.

“Makes you sort of feel part of the whole business!”

Thornton nodded. John had merely substituted the universal for the particular.

“Can’t you imagine,” he continued, “all this being like a drop of water—with us inside it? I suppose a bug

thinks—if it thinks—that its own globule is the universe. Suppose now that a great foot should come suddenly down out of the sky——”

Thornton laughed.

“That’s like Sill’s poem about the five invisible mites of monads who lived in a drop on a leaf. Ever read it? One that he calls ‘the meditative monad’ thought:

“‘Tradition, handed down for hours and hours,  
Tells that our globe, this quivering crystal world,  
Is slowly dying. What if, seconds hence,  
When I am very old, yon shimmering dome  
Come crawling down and down, till all things end?’  
Then with a weazen smirk he proudly felt  
No other mote of God had ever gained  
Such giant grasp of universal truth.  
But while they led their wondrous little lives  
Eonian moments had gone wheeling by,  
The burning drop had shrunk with fearful speed;  
A glistening film—’twas gone; the leaf was dry!

John regarded his father with serious eyes.

“By George! That’s good stuff. Do you believe it, dad?”

“Who knows what he believes?” answered the banker. He started to crank the fly-wheel.

“Cush! Cush!—Cush! Cush!” it went, then spun back upon itself and stopped.

“If we could only take the whole affair apart the way we can this engine—cold—we might find out; the trouble is the blooming thing is going full tilt and we can’t touch it!”

“Like everything else,” interpolated John.

“Civilization is like a big ocean liner, full of the most complicated machinery, so delicate that the slightest disarrangement will throw it all out of kilter. Maybe a

better world could have been devised; maybe human nature could have been improved; maybe a more equable industrial system invented; but we're on the ship, we've started on the voyage, and if we stop in mid-ocean and try to rebuild it, alter our machinery or change the crew, we'll never get to port. Darn this thing!"

"Cush! Cush!—Cush! Cush!" it said.

Thornton sat back.

"I'm tired!" he said. "I'm not going to monkey with this machine any longer to-day. What do you say to a walk in the woods?"

He took the oar and poled toward the beach.

The *Di* slithered on to the sand and they got out. A path led along the shore, and they followed it for a mile or so until, coming to a point covered with spruce and hemlock, Thornton threw himself full length on a patch of reindeer moss.

"I'd no idea I was so done!" he remarked.

He rolled lazily over on his stomach and filled his pipe.

"Johnny," he said, "I've been meaning to have a powwow with you for a long time—only somehow I've never got round to it. I suppose I've been waiting until you should get broken in at the shop—learn the general scheme of the Foundations—find your sea-legs. Fact of the matter is, one never has any time for anything—unless one grabs it."

He took a long pull and made a series of smoke rings.

"You see, I've always regarded myself as a young man and you as a mere kid. And there was the war! But after all, I'm fifty-four. If I should pop off, I'm afraid you'd be left more or less in the air."

John shook his head.

"Worse than that. But you *are* a young man, dad!"

"Wish I were!" answered his father. "There's so much to be done and so little time to do it!"

He sucked at his pipe.

"You and I are in a hard place, Jacko! If we were guessing just for ourselves it wouldn't much matter whether we guessed right or not about these things. But we're guessing for so many other people that, as Degoutet says, 'it's appalling!' Besides, we're dealing in such huge sums of money that we have to take long views. We've no time to waste on chicken-feed. But we want to do the right thing. The big question is, 'What *is* the right thing?'

"I've experimented all my life in trying to do good, and it's the hardest job in the world to give away money wisely. Everybody has learned that by now. As Pritchett says, a man has got to 'sweat blood' if he is to give in such a way that his money isn't going to do more harm than good. And he's got to do it himself—not through a salaried proxy, either. You can only lend people a hand—help 'em to get on their feet—or over the hill. If you give a man money you usually pauperize him; if you pay him more than he's worth he quits working; and work is the salvation of the individual and the race.

"That is what the world needs. And you can't have work unless there's work to be done; that requires capital; and capital means a surplus of profit. How much? That's the question! Give the laborer all his demands and you starve the enterprise and, in the end, the laborer too. Give him too little and you have a poor workman and a social danger-spot. Up to a certain point it's good business to be not only humane but generous. Beyond that point it isn't. For the only good business is the one that shows a profit on the investment. The one



that's conducted at a loss is living on its hump, wipes out its capital, and leaves the workman in the lurch.

"Sounds simple enough, doesn't it? But it's the most complicated problem in Christendom. And you can't solve it with a lot of loose sentimental talk about human brotherhood, either. In the end you always have to come back to the law of supply and demand. You can't run a business as a philanthropy. You've got to stand up to these fellows and let 'em see you're boss. Take the Mid-West Coal Company, for instance."

"I've been hoping you'd find time to talk with me about that!" said John eagerly. "You see, I've never been out there, and there are so many things I want to know."

His father thrust a strip of grass through his pipe-stem.

"The Mid-West Coal Company will be one of your choicest hereditaments!" He smiled whimsically. "I've expended more thought and money on that property than on anything else we own, and I've got only curses for my pains. No doubt you will have the same experience. I suppose it all boils down to the fact that money won't buy peace in industry any more than it will elsewhere. It's a pretty helpless thing—money! But it's always the fundamental issue—more wages, more money. And the question is, Have we got the money? I've looked into all these profit-sharing schemes, but the truth is that profit-sharing ought to involve loss-sharing, too, and you can't treat an employee as a partner if he's only willing to share in your prosperity and not hard times. You can't get that through their heads. They won't stand for an equivalent wage cut in bad years.

"No, we're facing something more out there than problems of wages or living conditions. The public



don't know that. They're misled by censorious and officious fools, self-constituted prophets, and sentimental women, all of whom go off half-cock and make it easy for the politicians to utilize what they say for political purposes. Look at this so-called 'Unpartisan Citizens' Committee,' for example! They didn't go near our property, and yet to read their report you'd think they spent all their time there. The Mid-West has got the finest physical layout in West Virginia. Every man has a four or five room house, with running water, plumbing, and electric light. He has churches, schools, and movies for which the company pays. He has a free hospital and medical service for a dollar a month. He can trade where he likes, but our stores are cheaper than the chain groceries. It's the best business in the world for us to make our men happy and contented—and they *are*!”

“But, father,” said John, “there must be abuses somewhere. Where did the Citizens' Committee go?”

“The union officials took them up Stinking Water and showed them those old hen-houses that the miners who organized the Indian Branch Coal Company built for themselves twenty years ago, and after that they personally conducted them up Eagle Creek to the Bitumen Fuel Company's property, where the strike is going on, and picked out the worst shacks they could as exhibits. Then they led them through the tent colonies and trotted out their best monologists to fill their ears with hard-luck stories of starvation and maltreatment, which was exactly what Mr. Steinbock and his committee wanted. And at that, what the committee saw wasn't any worse than what they could have seen right on the East Side in New York if they'd stayed at home!”

“What's the reason the Bitumen Fuel Company doesn't give its employees decent homes?” asked John.

"If it's good business for us to do so, why isn't it for them?"

"Because, my dear fellow, the Eagle Creek section is old and nearly exhausted. The mines are 'retreating,' as they say. Every carload that is taken out makes the haul to mine mouth longer and the profits less. They're hanging on by their eyelids. They can't put any more money into improvements and they can't pay any more wages."

"Then why did the men strike? They must have known that the company couldn't afford to give them a raise."

Thornton laughed grimly.

"They didn't, or at least wouldn't have if left to themselves. The strike was called by the officials of the United Mine Workers sitting in Indianapolis as part of a campaign to force unionism on the non-union fields."

"But I thought the Bitumen Fuel Company was already unionized."

"It is," answered his father, "but that doesn't make any difference. And now those poor devils are loafing around in the tent colonies, living on their 'relief checks' and wondering what it is all about—twice as badly off as they were before. They had no kick, because they knew the company couldn't afford to give anything better. Now, twenty years later, when we started in with a highly capitalized concern in a rich new district, we could afford—in fact, it was cheaper—to build the best sort of substantial houses, to put in modern improvements, and to take steps to keep the property clean and the people healthy and contented."

"But are they satisfied? I've seen several letters from Warren and Kurtz that seem to indicate that there was a good deal of discontent," said John dubiously.

"There is," replied his father. "We're nearly sur-

rounded by union properties and the union would give anything to organize us also. We manage to keep most of the agitators out, but they sneak in in spite of us. Anything like that Burk affair worries me sick. Yet there's no help for it. Once those fellows get at work it's all over. We have to use force to meet force. That's what bothers me. Why *should* the men and the operators be ranged in two hostile camps? Why *should* it be necessary for us to refuse to discuss things with them collectively? Yet we can't. We can't permit—or at least recognize—any sort of organization. I know that the union has been the means of securing for the worker most of the benefits he's got in the past. It's lifted him out of industrial slavery. Theoretically I'm for collective bargaining. I recognize a 'right' on the part of the men to organize, but I also recognize the right of a free worker to refuse to be organized and my right to protect him from slavery to the union. The same liberty he has to join the union entitles him to remain out of it, and when the union demands that I employ only union men, when it insists that I shall 'check off' union dues from the wages of non-union men who don't want to join the union in order to force them to do so—then, John, this poor old malefactor puts his foot down and his head up and says 'No, I have my rights too—sacred ones! Millions for defence! Not one cent for tribute!'"

John felt a thrill.

"Good work, dad! Then what have you got on your conscience?"

"Nothing, thank God!" answered Thornton. "I suppose what worries me is what seems to be the failure of the democratic idea—or at any rate the lack of its practical application—in a basic industry. An irrepressible

conflict, it might seem, between liberty and property. Really, a man ought to have some say himself in matters that concern his own life. Yet it would almost seem"—his eyes wandered through the tree-trunks—"as though the multitude of men earning their livelihood underground were somehow being sacrificed to a conflict of rights, and what's more, I don't see any way out of it. Hello! What's that?"

He raised his head and listened. There was a faint humming in the air like that of a giant bumble bee, now dying away, now increasing in volume.

John cocked his ear to the sky. "Sounds like a plane!"

They scrambled through the trees to the shore. The noise of the plane was now a shattering roar that filled the entire universe. Next instant the machine itself dipped down over the tree-tops and came skimming toward them up the lake.

"The cheek of the brute!" ejaculated the banker.

The hydroplane, which carried a passenger in addition to the pilot, stopped its engine, took the water gracefully opposite the cove, swam for a few yards, and came to a stop. One of the occupants began shouting through a small megaphone, and Lucie, waving her hand in welcome, came running down to the beach and put off in the canoe.

"This is the limit!" cried Thornton furiously as they hurried along the beach to the canoe. "One can't have privacy any longer even in the wilderness. I'll give that chap a piece of my mind!"

As they emerged upon the beach the two helmeted aviators were just stepping out of the canoe. The shorter rushed forward and threw his arms around the banker.

"Hello, dad! Thought we'd give you a surprise! Ditty wired you were going to be here, so Ranny suggested we fly over from Cambridge. We've made it in just five hours and twelve minutes. Some going! Ranny, I want you to meet my father. Dad—this is my friend, Ranny McLane."

The night was frosty, the sky set with a thousand golden sconces dripping liquid fire as Thornton and Jean walked down the ramp to where the "Special" was waiting to take the banker back to the junction. This wife of his! How he loved her! What a waste—this running back and forth to the greasy city—when he might be spending the precious time with her. He squeezed her arm under his, looking high into the scintillating heavens.

"There *is* something beyond, Jean!" he muttered.

"Of course, dear!"

"I'll be back Sunday!"

She made no answer.

"Thornton."

"What is it?"

"I'm afraid it's too late!"

"For what?"

"Thorny has been over here twice already this spring in the McLane boy's aeroplane."

"You mean—Lucie?"

"Yes—he's out with her now in the canoe—in the dark! I might as well tell you the whole story," she went on nervously. "Yesterday I saw him kiss her in the grove. Of course they were brought up together and are almost like brother and sister, and I didn't attach any importance to it at the time. No doubt it was a



perfectly innocent caress, but—well, going off at night this way somehow seems different. I don't like it!"

Thornton drew in his breath sharply.

Jean could not see the look that crossed her husband's face, but she felt him wince.

"I'll—speak to Tom!" he said with decision. "This has got to be nipped in the bud!"

Some one was already in the back seat of the motor when they reached it.

"Hello, Jacko! Going to keep me company down to the junction?"

"Going to keep you company back to New York, dad."

"Nonsense! Do you take me for a blooming invalid?" exclaimed his father impatiently.

"I want to. I've a lot to do in the office and on the grand jury."

"Let him, dear!" urged Jean.

She said nothing to John himself, but the kiss that she gave him was eloquent of her appreciation. As yet she had no inkling that her eldest son had any private reason for preferring city life.



## CHAPTER XIV

### ENTER MR. GIDEON

JOHN was awakened by the panting of engines and the shriek and whistle of escaping steam. The electric light was on in the compartment, his father was dressing; the car was at rest.

The door clicked and Wallace Garvey, carrying an enormous bulgy portfolio, stood unctuously in the aperture, radiating a welcome. John, his eyes and hair full of coal dust, stumbled into his clothes. It was only eleven minutes past six as they entered the concourse, already swarming with people.

They crossed the street, where the secretary had reserved a room at a hotel, and while John bathed and changed his linen, his father threw himself on the bed and listened to Mr. Garvey's report of the day before. Through the half-open door of the bathroom John, lying luxuriously in the tub, could hear his carefully modulated tones sinking to a whisper as he said something about an appointment for nine o'clock at the hotel. John caught the word *Vortex*.

It was a vortex! But it had been the same ever since he could remember. His father was always called at seven; Mr. Garvey arrived at half-past and made his verbal report while the banker ate his coffee and rolls, reading aloud the more important letters last received. By a quarter to eight they had adjourned to the working library, where Thornton began dictating to two secretaries, while Garvey sorted the private mail delivered at

the house, invariably amounting to several hundred letters.

There was a regular system. One secretary slit the envelopes, removed the contents, and passed them to Mr. Garvey, who sat behind a row of mahogany boxes six inches in height. With a speed acquired from long experience he glanced at each in turn and laid it in its appropriate receptacle, each of which bore a slightly differing label, such as "Beg. Form A," "Beg. Form B," "G. & Co.," "Personal," "Threats," "Delay," "Garvey," "Yes," "No," "Gen. Form 1," "Gen. Form 2," etc., etc. In addition to the up-town mail the Broadway office averaged each day about two thousand letters requesting financial aid from schools, colleges, charities, and private individuals, who wanted everything from theatre tickets to private cars and saw no reason why they should not be supplied. The threatening and blackmailing letters usually numbered about fifty. Thornton never read these, which, after being copied and indexed, were turned over to the Police Department.

This occupied an hour or more, and at the end Thornton jumped into his car and was whisked down-town, while the secretaries and Mr. Garvey finished up the correspondence by means of forms, of which there were nearly a hundred, often varying in but a word or two, and which were arranged in a series of olive-colored steel cabinets across the end of the room. Each form was so printed as to convey the absolute impression of having been separately typewritten, and thus the correspondence was kept fairly well up to date. Mr. Garvey generally managed to get through by noon, but the two secretaries worked all day and frequently overtime.

Once down-town most of the morning was devoted to conferences following immediately one upon the other,

and appointed weeks and sometimes months in advance. Matters pertaining to international loans and bond issues took much of Thornton's time, as did occasional trips to Washington and less frequently to Chicago, Montreal, London, or Paris. The directors' meetings, of which there were always several each day, started in at twelve, drifted over into the luncheon hour, and ended anywhere from half-past three to half-past six.

These "boards" were of several kinds. The first was composed of the directorates upon which some member of the firm of Graham & Co. sat as a matter of course as representing the bondholders. Sometimes this representation was purely formal; at others active and onerous. Owing to the foresight and skill of the many partners, few of the underwritings of Graham & Co. were unsuccessful. Occasionally, however, a company would get into trouble, and then the partner representing the bondholders or stockholders was perforce obliged to step in and temporarily to become a manufacturer of automobiles, or an operator of mines, or a railroad man, until the business, whatever it might be, got on its legs again.

But Graham & Co. were not "in business" as such, and the last thing they wanted was any part in the management of industry. They were buyers and sellers of money—nothing else; were merchants of credit, looking for quick turnovers of capital for themselves and their enormous clientele. They did not want that capital tied up in an enterprise which they had been obliged to take over and manage. They wanted to market securities—not to hold them on their shelves like dry-goods for which the public had lost its taste.

By this selling of money and credit and marketing of securities Graham & Co. performed a valuable function

in the business world, for the sums required in modern enterprise are so vast that no other machinery could get them together. The newly projected industry must find money to build its plant; and Graham & Co., representing untold millions of the savings of poor as well as rich, lawyers and errand boys, fine ladies and nurse-maids, State senators and fruit vendors, let it out to the directors at interest and then saw to it that that interest was earned. But in this they represented only money.

A second class of directorates upon which sat members of the firm of Graham & Co. was composed of other financial institutions in which the bank had a direct interest—all concerned with money and absolutely nothing else.

A third class of directorates on which Thornton Graham or his half-uncles—or perhaps all of them—sat was made up of those enterprises in which were invested the individual fortunes of the various members of the family. The largest of these was the Calizona Copper Company, the next largest the Mid-West Coal Company, into which Shiras, Levi, and Thornton's father, Ezra, had each put five millions, the fifteen millions thus pooled representing forty-five per cent of the company's capital stock and exercising control for the reason that the rest of the stock was scattered throughout the country in the hands of small investors. Also, as up to this time Shiras and Levi had always followed their nephew's lead and voted their stock according to his suggestions, Thornton Graham had not only controlled the board of directors of the Mid-West Coal Company, but, so far as any one man who was not a manager could be, he *was* the Mid-West Coal Company.

Now herein perhaps lay the misfortune of society. For although Thornton Graham was beyond all doubt a

high-minded and generous man, nevertheless he could not as a professional banker help regarding the Mid-West Coal Company as an impersonal entity to which he had sold his money and which existed primarily for the purpose of earning interest on its bonded indebtedness and of paying dividends upon its stock; whereas it was in fact much more, as no one knew better than he.

Any enterprise which assumes to perform a necessary public service—such as furnishing fuel from a limited natural resource upon which the community depends for its very life; in which are engaged three thousand citizens, the majority of whom have wives and families dependent upon them, whose children attend the public schools, and who may themselves at any moment be called upon to aid their country in the various exigencies of war or peace—such an enterprise viewed in the broad economy of the state is clearly something other than a mere machine for making money.

Apart from the fact that upon its efficiency depends the comfort of our lives and the success of our undertakings, our safety in war, our capacity of resistance to plague and famine, this aggregation of human beings, presents, through its liability to physical disease, economic distemper, and political disaffection, a problem which demands the tenderest solicitude. Yet with all his other responsibilities Thornton Graham could devote little personal attention to the Mid-West Coal Company.

While Thornton was having his turn at the bathroom John endeavored to lighten his father's burdens by going over a hundred or so letters which Mr. Garvey produced from his brief case. He did not like Mr. Garvey, and he did not appreciate the reasons why his father had him around. But by half after eight the mail had been disposed of, the secretary had taken his departure, and



father and son went downstairs into the big, cheerful dining-room for breakfast.

"Who is coming to see you at nine o'clock, father?"

"Jake Gideon—owner of *The Vortex*," answered Thornton; "one of the worst crooks outside Sing Sing."

"Why do you see him?"

"Garvey thinks it would be wise to get a line on him, and to give you one, too. At any rate, it is no use to antagonize him needlessly, and he requested the interview. He's close to the labor people, and we may get some valuable information out of him. He may try to hold us up. Forewarned is forearmed. I'm going to have him up-stairs, where he can't plant a fake witness in case he should try to blackmail us afterward."

He spoke in a matter-of-fact tone, but John was thrilled. *The Vortex*, masquerading as a "friend of labor," was in reality a yellow cur of no particular breed which, like a dog with the rabies, bit indiscriminately at all who came across its path.

Mr. Gideon arrived promptly and was shown up to the room where Thornton and John were sitting. He looked at first glance anything but a villain, but rather a benign old fellow with white hair and wrinkles, who walked with a limp. It was only when he smiled, which he did occasionally, that one glimpsed something unpleasant. Mr. Gideon expressed himself as delighted to make Mr. John's acquaintance. He had known Thornton, it seemed, for a good many years and plunged directly into the business at hand.

"I've come to see if we can't be of service to you in this Mid-West coal mixup. *The Vortex* has always been very friendly, as you know, both to you and to the members of your family, Mr. Graham. No doubt you've seen our write-up about Mr. John's grand jury? Now, while



we're usually radical in our political tendencies, this bituminous coal situation is one where there's a lot can be said on either side. We haven't committed ourselves as yet. But we shall have to within a day or two."

Thornton nodded. He was familiar with the opening—the "Dick Turpin gambit"—Jake's favorite.

"Yes, sir—we'll be compelled to declare ourselves within a very few days. Now, I'm in constant touch with the labor men, and I'm in a position to find out all their plans. If *The Vortex* took an unsympathetic stand it would bother them a lot. Yes, yes—it certainly would!"

He spat into the empty china cuspidor and followed it with a cigar ash.

"I s'pose you know, Mr. Graham, that this row out to Bitumen is only part of a big campaign?"

"So I understood," replied Thornton shortly.

"Yes, sir! That's what it is. The rights and the wrongs in any particular locality don't make much difference. That's why it would be so easy for *The Vortex* to take whatever position seemed desirable. I tell you frankly, Mr. Graham, my own sympathies are on your side—but a paper is an expensive proposition and if we came out flat against the miners it would cost us thousands of subscribers."

He lowered his voice and looked about the room.

"It just sort of occurred to me, Mr. Graham, you might like to buy an interest in the paper."

"Hm! What do you value it at?" inquired Thornton quietly.

"Well, I guess it ought to be worth pretty near three million dollars," answered Gideon.

"How large is your list of subscribers?"

"We've got a circulation of two hundred thousand."

"And you base your valuation on that?"

Mr. Gideon smiled, and John saw for the first time a row of discolored fangs that filled him with disgust.

"Not exactly!" he smirked. "This is how I figure it. You hold one hundred and fifty thousand shares of Mid-West common—selling to-day at seventy-one. If *The Vortex* comes out against you—with what we know about the abuses out in Bitumen—and so on and so on—and the strike an' all—the stock'll be high at fifty. May go to thirty! Well, say it only goes to fifty—there's twenty points on one hundred and fifty thousand shares—that's *three* millions, ain't it?"

There was a silence during which John held his breath—a silence that seemed to hiss. Thornton's face was set.

"But I'm not talking any such figure as that!" Mr. Gideon hurried on soothingly. "I only thought you might like to take a *little* interest."

"How much?"

"A couple of hundred thousand. I'd give you a quarter interest for that—a real concession."

Thornton Graham leaned forward with his fists clenched on the arms of his chair. "Gideon! You dirty blackmailer!"

Mr. Gideon smiled broadly, and this time John saw that there were no teeth in the back of his gums.

"Come, come, Mr. Graham!" he said. "Don't be extravagant! That's what you are—extravagant. You misunderstand me entirely. Would you mind asking Mr. Johnny here to step into the other room?"

John lifted his eyebrows. His father nodded.

"And close the door!" added Gideon.

John did as requested, but he soon became bored with looking out of the window. Stepping into the corridor

he was astounded to see Wallace Garvey standing outside his father's door apparently listening through the transom to what was being said inside. He was about to protest when he saw Garvey grasp the handle of the door and throw it violently open just as Mr. Jacob Gideon came flying out. Either some violence applied behind, or the absence of resistance in front, caused the editor of *The Vortex* to pitch headlong into the middle of the corridor. He staggered to his feet dazed. The secretary paid not the slightest attention to him. John hurried back through the bathroom just as Mr. Garvey entered.

"A telegram for you, sir. It was just delivered at the house," said Garvey. "I hope he didn't harm you, sir!"

Thornton Graham stood by the window, white and trembling.

"No," he swallowed. "No, he didn't—assault—me!"

John rushed out into the hall, but Mr. Gideon had disappeared.

"I must watch that fellow Garvey!" muttered John to himself. "I bet he's up to some devilment. I don't see why father trusts him as he does!"

## CHAPTER XV

### "HARD-BOILED"

It was twelve o'clock and the board room was already filling when John came in. The midday sun, pouring through the high windows, cast brilliant yellow squares upon the hand-woven carpet and dazzling spots upon the great mahogany table near which Mr. Wallace Garvey was hovering. The air was hazy with cigar smoke. A large map of the County of Bitumen hung on the near-by wall. Two directors stood by a window joking loudly. Three or four others sat at the table glancing over reports. At the farther end old Shiras, massive, handsome, and immaculate, was listening as he smoked to Rudolph Kurtz, the assistant vice-president in charge of operations, a thick-set man in tweeds, who from time to time pounded his left palm with his right fist.

The voice of Randolph McLane rang from the window.

"Bet a thousand dollars I've got the worst boy in the United States!" he boasted cheerfully.

"I'll take part of that!" came instantly in varying keys, but with equal certainty, from several different directions.

McLane laughed, rubbing his heavy blue jaw.

"Yes, I have!" he repeated. "Bet I've got the worst boy baby in the whole United States! He's up at Harvard. He's something *ter-ri-ble*!"

"Pooh!" challenged the man nearest him. "I'll lay you two hundred he isn't a marker to my young hopeful! Mine's at Yale!"

The door opened and a much wrinkled man in tall hat

and broadcloth entered, leaning heavily on a cane. His flabby, sunken face, with the loose skin hanging beneath, gave him the look of an ancient turkey with something on its mind. The resemblance was accentuated when he moved his head. Immediately behind him followed a cadaverous man of middle age, who somehow created an impression of almost equal decrepitude.

Mr. Garvey hastened forward brightly.

"Good morning, Mr. Levi! Good morning, Mr. Homer!"

"Morning, Shiras!" piped the antiquarian in a cracked treble.

He was in a constant state of perturbation whenever he was with his brother, whom he believed quite capable, even at the age of eighty, of doing and saying the most dreadful things. He moved as hastily as he could in the other direction and allowed himself to be helped out of his overcoat by Mr. Garvey, who bustled about, pulling out chairs and distributing documents like the busybody in the ancient game of "The Devil among the Tailors."

"Good morning, Mr. Kayne! Good morning, Mr. Pepperill! Quite well, thank you, sir! Good morning, Senator Krass!"

There was a momentary hush succeeded by an outburst of greeting as Thornton entered and made his way to the farther end of the table.

"The meeting will please come to order!"

The other directors all found places, and Mr. Garvey pulled up a chair just behind the chairman.

"I've called this meeting, gentlemen, because the situation in West Virginia makes it necessary for us to consider and decide some fundamental questions. The general bituminous strike is at once our opportunity and



our danger. A very delicate question of policy is involved. Mr. Kurtz, our local manager, is on here and I will ask him to outline briefly what the conditions are. Mr. Kurtz."

Mr. Kurtz arose and looked quietly about him. He knew his audience, had led it by the nose for years.

"The situation, gentlemen, is simply this. The United Mine Workers, as you know, have been planting men in Bitumen for some time with a view to capturing our mines. We've always had a very efficient inside service—the 'Grapevine,' we call it—spotted the trouble-makers, and thrown 'em out. The Mid-West men don't want the union and they've declared themselves time and again. But Wallick is a clever fellow, and he's a fanatic besides. So long as southern West Virginia remains unorganized no national bituminous coal strike can succeed, for we West Virginians mine more than a third of the tonnage for the whole country, and produce more than half the coal available for general distribution. Therefore, Wallick has got to get us or unionization in the bituminous coal industry will collapse."

"Hear! Hear!" piped Levi. Shiras glowered contemptuously at him while Kurtz took a sip of water.

"They are making the fight of their lives. Through the 'check-off,' by which the union dues are automatically deducted from the men's wages when the organization is in control, Wallick gets for his war-chest from fifteen million to twenty million dollars a year. He can call a strike and feed the strikers indefinitely. He can arm his men with high-powered rifles. He can buy the brains and eloquence of some of the cleverest talkers, writers, and press-agents on earth. He can slip fifty thousand dollars to the right man in the right place. Yes—bribery. I know what I'm talking about—be-



cause I was an official of the U. M. W. myself before I saw the error of my ways. I tell you all this because I don't want to minimize the struggle. If we stand pat we are going to have a big fight on our hands—but we'll win.

"We've always refused to treat with the men collectively, and we've managed hitherto to keep organizers off the property. Like the U. S. Steel Company, we're a 'no-conference' concern. But they've managed to get in somehow and organized about half the men. Once the agitators get among 'em you know how they work. They sure can talk. The men don't want the union, but they're shamed into signing up. They can't stand for having their wives and children called 'scabs'."

"Why do you think the men don't want the union?" John turned to look at the speaker, a gaunt yet engaging young man with high cheek-bones and curly brown hair that grew into a peak in the middle of his forehead.

"Because they know it's nothing but a political and money-collecting agency, Mr. Maitland," replied Kurtz. "Do you realize that seventy per cent of all the miners in Pango, our prize non-union county, have belonged to the union at one time or another? They know perfectly well that having the union doesn't mean any better living conditions or any better wages. It merely means giving up money and surrendering their independence to trouble-makers. I tell you, and I know from personal experience, if the men have confidence that the management is strong enough to protect them from the unions, they won't listen to the agitators; they won't organize. And unless you are strong enough to keep organizers and agents off your property, you show yourself too weak to protect your men. It's the strong-arm crowd that officers the union—and the men are afraid for their

women. If the president of the district gets after a man's wife, Mr. Maitland, he's in a hell of a position."

Mr. Maitland nodded. "No doubt!" he commented. "But isn't that equally true of a company mine guard?"

Mr. Kurtz's lips became suddenly compressed.

"Well, I suppose it is. But if we didn't have some sort of police protection, our properties would be overrun with moonshiners and fast women. You don't seem to realize what a wild country we live in. If the State government doesn't operate, we can't just lie down and hand our properties over to the 'wobblies'!"

"I don't think we need at this time to go into the question of unionization. We are not considering recognizing the union," said Rufus Kayne. "What do the men say they want?"

Mr. Kurtz threw a look of relief at the president of the Utopia Trust.

"They want a conference. But I know from our inside men that they are going to demand we recognize the union, institute the check-off, and give them a twenty per cent raise in wages, but of course they always throw that last in whether they expect to get it or not—as a bait for the other men. If we won't talk to them, they threaten to strike. But it's really a strike to unionize—nothing else. In fact, the international organization sent a financial agent to Bitumen months ago to back the effort to unionize the whole Indian Branch district."

"Do you refer to Burk?" inquired Maitland, to John's great interest.

Mr. Kurtz reddened faintly.

"That was an unfortunate incident. The trouble was he showed fight. If he'd stayed on the train peaceably nothing would have happened to him."

"How many mine guards are there on the Mid-West pay-rolls?" continued the gaunt youth.

"We have eight or ten police at present."

"Are they armed?"

"They have revolvers and sticks."

Randolph McLane screwed his cigar into a receiver.

"Oh, let's get down to business! What's this got to do with it?"

Thornton Graham looked up quickly.

"A lot to do with it! That is, if we are really going to give our labor policy a thorough overhaul."

"Violence breeds violence," declared Maitland. "In my opinion, we can't afford to set the example."

"What would you have us do? Let the reds come right on the property, call a strike, and blow up the power plant if you didn't give in? I tell you, sir, you don't understand what we're up against! The Mid-West is sandwiched between two solid sections of unionized camps. We've got our back to the wall.

"There are about two thousand men now on strike along the river. There's tent colonies on every creek. We're entirely cut off from law and order. In case of a strike, they'll break the railroad and telegraph lines. There's a lot of sniping going on, but—we can beat them! If we protect our men properly, they'll stand by us, and if any of 'em go out, I can fill their places from down-river. All I need is your hearty support. Give me a free hand and I'll fight those bastards—excuse me!—to a frazzle. If they want to strike, let them go out and stay out until hell freezes over. Give me a free hand and I'll bust those people in six weeks."

"What's the question you want us to decide?" asked Senator Krass abruptly of Thornton Graham. Indeed, the same thought had constantly recurred to John. Up

to this time he had had only a general impression of the labor difficulties of the operating end of the business. Yet the idea of surrendering to unionism under compulsion was unthinkable. Rather than that——!

"The question is: What position we shall take with the men?" replied Thornton. "The issue of whether the bituminous coal fields are to be unionized or not may eventually be decided by public opinion. We're a pivotal property. The public doesn't understand why it has to pay five times what coal is worth at mine-head. It is ready to believe anything, including that miners are treated worse than dogs. If we refuse even to talk to the men—take what may seem to those who are ignorant of the truth an arbitrary position—it may antagonize the public, the press, even the government, to such an extent that we'll be forced to give in."

"What position does Mr. Warren take?" asked Mr. Pepperill.

"He agrees we've got to fight sooner or later, and we might as well do it now as any other time."

"I'm with him!" said Senator Krass. "Either you must crush the union, or the union will crush you!"

"We have always left our labor policy entirely to our representatives on the ground," remarked the lawyer. "Is there really anything in the present situation that should lead us to change our attitude?"

"Pish-posh!" suddenly roared Shiras. "There's no sense in trying to dicker with a bunch of highwaymen."

"May I have a word, gentlemen?"

It was Maitland again. John felt instinctively that he was the kind of fellow to pin to. A funny chap, though, to be in this hard-boiled bunch. He wondered how he'd got there.

"It seems to me," Maitland was saying, "that we've

got to face the fact that the coal business in this country, for one reason or another, has got into such a mess that the public, which uses the coal, may sooner or later—rightly or wrongly—take it upon itself to say: ‘We don’t care what are the technical points in dispute, but we need coal and we propose to have it. Step aside, please, and continue your quarrel while we get it!’ When that time comes, if it does come, what the public does to us will depend a good deal upon what it thinks of us.

“We personally know that Mr. Warren is a sound and able man. He believes in running the business as a sort of benevolent autocracy. Our men have been really better off than those of any other company—union or non-union. But if they ask us to arbitrate what they consider an injustice, in a way that does not in itself involve recognition of the ‘closed shop,’ much more if they merely ask us to talk with them, can we afford to appear to ignore them or to take an attitude which may to the world seem tyrannical?

“It seems to me that the time is coming, if it isn’t here already, when we have got to concede something—not to the men, but to the general public’s idea of how industry should be conducted. I may not make myself very clear, but while I’m just as much against all these highbrow researchers as any of you, I’m wondering if an industry involving over a million workmen and the several million individuals composing their families can be run solely on arbitrary economic lines—supply and demand, hire and fire—if and when—and this is the point—we’re living in a political democracy of which those millions form a substantial fraction. In a word, can we continue to operate an industry along feudalistic lines——”



"Bunk!" growled Shiras.

"——a feudal island in a sea of democracy? *Can* we do it? That's the question—it's a practical one.

"The union is the only thing that the miner has with which to protect himself against injustice. We can't blame the miner for believing in organization, and we must admit the right of collective bargaining. I am not urging recognition of the union. I admit I don't know where I stand on that. I only say that we ought to treat the men as human beings, as interested parties, as 'brothers,' if you don't object to the word, and that if we don't we'll pay for it in the end. The public will treat us—as we treat the men!"

"Don't make the mistake of imagining we don't treat the men as brothers, Mr. Maitland," interposed Mr. Kurtz somewhat excitedly. "We've got one of the finest Y. M. C. A. buildings in West Virginia—pool tables, bowling alleys, shower-baths, cafeteria, and a regular parson to run it. I tell you, he can sure make some talk! Our treatment of the men as brothers cost us at least ten thousand a year."

"And it's all bosh!" exploded Shiras. "Do you think that camouflage—that old chloroform—fools anybody?"

"I sure do!" retorted Mr. Kurtz.

John was getting restive. He looked anxiously at Maitland. He wanted him to ask Kurtz whether by giving a man a shower-bath you could justify yourself in refusing to talk to him about his grievances. But at the moment his father stood up.

"This discussion has wandered pretty far afield," he said. "One thing is clear; no one of us is in favor of recognizing the union. Therefore, that issue does not arise. The question is purely one of policy. Shall we continue our no-conference policy of 'take it or leave it'—



of refusing to treat with the men collectively—or shall we attempt to conciliate them and, incidentally, the public by meeting them half way and hearing what they have to say——" He paused.

"And trying to redress their grievances, if they have any," supplemented Maitland apologetically.

"Yes," continued Graham. "Will such a course involve or precipitate the very thing we are trying to avoid—a strike?"

"It will precipitate it!" answered Mr. Kurtz. "One sign of weakness and they'll rush us off our feet."

"We mustn't yield an inch," agreed Kayne. "Once the union gets complete control of the mining industry, and we shall have a revolution in our form of government. Not a bloody one, but revolution by government ownership of basic industries controlled by labor unions. The non-union coal-fields are the only thing that stands between the U. S. and socialism. I am in favor of going to the mat with the union—as a matter of principle if nothing else."

"The truth of the matter is, gentlemen," said Mr. Kurtz, seeing sentiment coming his way, "that our company—any company, in fact—could give its men all they asked—everything—and would be glad to, if they didn't insist on having the union."

"But, Mr. Kurtz!" exploded John, to his own intense surprise. "How are we to know what the men want if we won't talk to them?"

Maitland, up the table, gave him a friendly nod.

"I'd like to say a word," interposed Randolph McLane. "This has all been fought out in the steel industry—and disposed of once and forever. There is, of course, something in what Mr. Maitland says, but most of it is old Sunday-school stuff. If those parsons who

lined up with the socialists in that Interchurch Movement Report on the steel strike had put a little Christianity into their attitude toward capital, one would feel differently. But that report was full of envy, hatred, malice, and false witness—as to-day everybody agrees. The fact is, we know a darn sight better than the laborer does what's good for him. I stand with George F. Baer. I carry what he said around in my pocket and read it to my friends." He produced a wallet and removed a type-written strip. "Listen here: 'The rights and interests of the laboring man will be protected and cared for, not by the labor agitators, but by the Christian men to whom God has given the control of the property interests of the country!' Those are my sentiments. Who are the Christian men to whom God has given the property interests of the country? They're us—us who are sitting here around this table. And I, as one of them, say to that whole God damned crew of socialists, radicals, Y. M. C. A.'s, and meddlers in other people's business—go straight to hell!"

"Hear! Hear!" clucked Levi.

"I suggest that we put the question of a change in our labor policy to a vote," said Kayne. "As I take it, we are here to decide whether we shall leave things absolutely in Mr. Warren's hands or attempt to guide him at long range. How on earth can we do that? What do we know about it? We're the financial—the selling—end of the business. He's the man dealing with the men."

John saw his father put his elbows upon the table and rest his head in his hands.

"Excuse me for not rising," he said weakly. "I have been under quite a strain this morning. I had intended to go into this matter much more thoroughly, but I can see that the board has already made up its mind. I ad-

mit mine is quite at sea. Our old policy has been successful up to this time. Perhaps we had better stick to it—for a while longer, anyhow.

Mr. Garvey handed a sheet of paper to Randolph McLane.

"I move," he read aloud, "that the board approve the stand taken by Mr. Warren, our general manager, in dealing with a difficult situation and promise him our fullest co-operation and support."

"Second the motion!" said Shiras, pounding on the floor with his cane.

"All in favor—— It is a vote!"

"I now," continued McLane, "move that there be declared out of the earnings of the Mid-West Coal Company the regular quarterly dividend of one and three-quarters per cent."

"All in favor—— Contrary minded—— It is so ordered."

"Move we adjourn."

"Adjourned."

There was a general stretching and pushing back of chairs, a resumption of the chaffing and laughter that had been going on immediately beforehand. The whole performance had not occupied more than twenty minutes.

"Yes, sir," repeated Randolph McLane for the third time, in this instance to old Levi; "yes, sir, I've got absolute-ly the worst young devil of an offspring in the whole United States! His last year at Harvard cost me thirteen thousand dollars!"

John looked at his father to see what effect this announcement would have upon him, but Thornton apparently had not heard it. He was talking to Garvey.

Mr. Maitland approached somewhat diffidently and held out his hand.

"Rather a mix-up, isn't it? I had a hunch you felt a little as I did. The only reason I took the liberty of shooting off my mouth is because your father asked me to look into this matter of industrial relations—particularly in the bituminous coal industry—and report to him my conclusions."

"Have you got any?" asked John.

"I don't wonder you ask!" answered the young man. "Hanged if I have—that I think are worth anything. But there really are two sides to the question, you know. All the highbrows and parsons aren't Bolsheviks. But because they are ready to sympathize with the miner over his sorrows and misfortunes, the operators look upon them as enemies.

"The chief trouble isn't, in my humble opinion, economic at all. The real thing the unions are fighting for—I don't mean the United Mine Workers, but unions in general—is human recognition. They want recognition of the unions because that is a recognition of men. Don't take me for a parlor socialist or a Sunday-school superintendent, but honestly the biggest thing in industry isn't machinery, material, or markets, but men. The biggest thing in a man isn't the body, or even the mind, but the spirit. The greatest factors in production are spiritual factors. As old Charles Lamb said: 'I can't hate a man if I know him.' We've got to restore the human relationship. That doesn't mean merely giving the men a 'jolly,' either. It means letting the men know you're really interested in their welfare and treating them as human beings.

"But the policy of a company is no better than the man through whom it reaches the men. For example, the Mid-West spends more money on the comfort of its employees than any coal company in the United

States, but the milk of its human kindness is fed out to the men through fellows like our gentle associate here, Brother Kurtz. No matter how much of a Samaritan he'd like to be, his chief concern is bound to be to show a good balance sheet to us at the selling end here in New York. Just because he's been a spragger himself in his youth, he feels superior to the men who haven't succeeded as well as he has, and they regard him as an apostate, a turncoat, who is ready to sell them out for a big salary. There's no one so contemptuous as the superintendent who's 'risen from the ranks.' I'm inclined to believe that the solution of the industrial difficulty lies in the local management.”

“Hello! I'm glad you boys have got together!” said Thornton, turning from Garvey and laying a hand on the shoulder of each. “My son has just had quite an illuminating lesson into the management of big industry—hasn't he, Lloyd?”

Maitland laughed easily.

“It'll all come round in time!” he said.

Thornton Graham led them toward the nearest window. Most of the other directors had gathered in a group about Kurtz and were plying him with questions. It seemed to John as if his father were leaning very heavily upon him. Through the window they could look far down the harbor to the Narrows and through them to a blue bit of open ocean. A stiff breeze was blowing from the northwest. Two schooners and a lugger under full sail stood black against the sunlight.

“By George!” exclaimed the banker. “I'd give a lot to be out there——!”

John felt a spasm pass through his father's body as he made a convulsive movement with his hand toward his heart. Suddenly he sagged, a dead weight, into their arms.



His face was the color of a wasps' nest. His eyelids twitched feebly. Together they lowered him to the floor. John dropped upon his knees.

"Father! Father!" he kept repeating mechanically.

The room was in confusion. Old Shiras thrust himself forward, his face convulsed.

"It's his heart! Send for Doctor Landis!" he shouted. The rest crowded about helplessly, offering tentative suggestions and uttering vague phrases of sympathy. The suddenness of the shock, the horror of this unexpected catastrophe left John much as if he had been the victim of a paralytic stroke. He heard and saw dimly, but his nerves and senses were quite numb. He seemed to see himself kneeling there beside his father's body, staring heartbroken at the chalky face, on which now for the first time in weeks was an expression of peace. As through an opera glass he saw a seedy young man with a black bag force his way through the group of helpless directors, feel his pulse, lift his eyelids, and apply a stethoscope to his father's heart. Then he heard him say:

"I'm afraid I can't be of any assistance here."

There was a murmur of horror and sympathy.

"Doctor," cried John, "you must be able to do something!"

The physician shook his head.

"Nothing!" He felt in the banker's pocket, found a handkerchief, and laid it over the white face. Then he put the stethoscope back in his bag and got to his feet.

"Heart failure! Induced by overwork, probably."

The tears were running down old Shiras's cheeks. Levi sat in his chair, his face motionless and vacant. Randolph McLane stood with hunched shoulders looking out of the window.



John stared at them, then at the body beside him.

"Father!" he heard himself crying piteously.

"Father!"

But no words came from his lips.

## CHAPTER XVI

### HIS FATHER'S SHOES

#### § 1

MR. VINCENT PEPPERILL, sitting on one side of the big table in the board room of Graham & Co., tapped his fingertips lightly together.

"Well—there you are," he said in his thin, high-pitched voice. "The estate will run a little over a hundred millions. But the inheritance tax will take a large slice of it."

John, sitting opposite him, heard, but hardly understood. He had lost several pounds in weight; he was very pale and slender in his black clothes.

"The will gives forty millions to the Graham National Foundation," continued Mr. Pepperill, "provided Congress will grant it a charter. The bill was laid over last term, and it won't come up for several weeks yet. But if they don't grant it—why, there's forty millions more for you."

John passed his hand across his forehead wearily.

"I can't grasp it! Those big sums of money don't mean anything to me."

Mr. Pepperill shook his sparrow-like little head.

"It isn't money!" he said, stroking his lower lip. "That's where so many otherwise sensible people make a mistake. They think and speak of the Rockefeller fortune, or the Carnegie fortune, or the Graham fortune as a great mound of gold, piling up, piling up, piling up; whereas——"

"That's the way I think of it myself," interrupted John.

"Well, it isn't money at all!" repeated Mr. Pepperill.

"What is it, then?"

Mr. Pepperill waved his slender hand toward the table on which lay a loose-leaf ledger about sixteen inches square, bound in canvas.

"There it is—the whole hundred millions!" he said. "It's all between those covers—except for a few bonds down in the vault. It's not money, it's merely a bundle of papers—each one of which stands for an interest in some sort of productive enterprise that needed your father's money to start or keep it going and to pay its workmen."

"Yes, that's one way of looking at it," replied John.

"It's the proper way to look at it, my dear fellow!" retorted Mr. Pepperill. "Your grandfather, Mr. Ezra, who was a lifelong client of mine, never thought of his fortune in terms of money. It was always 'my dam,' 'my railroad,' 'my steamship,' 'my mine.'"

"Didn't he ever speak of 'my employees'?" asked John.

"He certainly did. No one ever treated his men better. In fact, he spent most of his time travelling around and visiting his properties."

"So I've heard," said John. "But father didn't."

"He couldn't. The fortune has grown so that—well, you see, unless you want to be absolutely responsible it's got to be distributed around! Now, of course, you do control two companies—the Calizona Copper Company, which Mr. Gray looks after, and the Mid-West Coal Company, which is unfortunately making so much trouble just now. My advice to you is to let somebody

else relieve you of that also. You're the only Graham left in the firm. You'll have troubles enough."

"How about all those other corporations that father was a director of?"

"You've already been substituted for him in most of them," answered the lawyer. "My dear John—if I may still call you so—this business of being a multi-millionaire is largely automatic. Being a director in a company needn't mean much."

"But oughtn't it to?" inquired his client soberly.

"No responsibility at all—if you don't have control!" replied Mr. Pepperill decisively. "You can't be thinking all the time about the employees' end of it. It's not your business. You're on the financial side."

"Somebody has got to think about them," answered John. He lifted the canvas-bound book. "You say this doesn't represent money? I grant it doesn't. But it represents power! You say 'reduce your holdings and you reduce your responsibility.' I agree—so far as each enterprise is concerned. But *do* you reduce your responsibility to—I don't want to use the word 'God' exactly—but in general—to use your influence for good? It doesn't seem to me so!"

"But a man has only one life and there are only twenty-four hours in a day. There's no sense in biting off more than you can chew!" asserted the distinguished counsel.

"Exactly!" answered his client. "What occurred to me was that if one couldn't fulfil the obligations imposed by having wealth perhaps it would be better for him not to have it."

Mr. Pepperill eyed him much as a robin might have regarded a new variety of *annelida vermiformia*.

"God bless my soul!" he ejaculated. "But how

would you get rid of it? Your money is doing much more good in keeping the wheels of industry running than it would in trying to turn a bunch of dingy clerks and iron workers into preachers, missionaries, or professors of romance philology."

John smiled.

"I agree to that. But aren't there some things that haven't been tried as yet—that might help straighten out those labor difficulties, for example? Has anybody ever established a chair of industrial relations at any university—to start an intelligent public opinion?"

"I doubt it," said Mr. Pepperill dryly.

"I wish I'd had such a course at Harvard," said John, "instead of taking botany! How much of an income have I got?"

"About ten dollars a minute."

"Can I spare some of it?"

Mr. Pepperill chuckled.

"My dear boy! What's the matter with you?"

"Nothing," answered John. "But I suggest that you write a letter as my attorney to the trustees of Calizona University and say that I am prepared to make them a gift of a hundred thousand dollars for the purpose of establishing in perpetuity a department under a full professor for the study of social relations in industry."

"Of course, if you desire it." Mr. Pepperill's acquiescence was not enthusiastic. "But, my dear John! Why rush into anything like that until you've thought it over!"

"I have."

"But have you considered the financial effect of the head of Graham & Co. doing something that might suggest a—a"—Mr. Pepperill hesitated and gave a slight cough—"well, any sympathy with socialism?"

"How could it?" demanded the younger man.

"Well, with—labor, then," amended the lawyer.

John's chin grew suddenly set, and he drew his brows together in an expression so like his father's that Mr. Pepperill started.

"I've considered the effect *if I don't!*" he replied grimly.

There was a momentary silence, broken by the lawyer.

"I shall—quite needless to say—be glad to write such a letter—Mr. Graham," he said hastily, and in an entirely different tone.

The door opened and Humpty Dumpty, as John always thought of Mr. Garvey, came in.

"Excuse me, Mr. Graham, but you haven't forgotten that you have a meeting of the board of the Calizona Copper Company at twelve, and of the Texas-Pacific Oil Company at two, have you?" he asked.

## § 2

The head of the house of Graham had been dead only six weeks, but in those six weeks a metamorphosis had occurred in his eldest son. Thornton, like all the males of the Graham stock, had been a strong character—a little overwhelming in his own family. He, with the facile assistance of Mr. Wallace Garvey, had planned everything, done everything, anticipated everything. John, in consequence, had been called upon for practically nothing. The circumstances of his early life and education had made him peculiarly dependent upon others. The banker had looked forward to a probationary period of possibly twenty years, during which the boy might learn the technic of finance and philanthropy, as he himself had learned it from Ezra, his father. No other Graham on record had died before



seventy; and Shiras and Levi, around eighty, were still going strong and to all intents and purposes were as good as ever. It was incongruous that John at twenty-seven should thus suddenly be forced into the position of head of the family, with its concomitant responsibility. And there was no one with whom to share it.

Confronted with the appalling task of administering a fortune of approximately a hundred million dollars, John Graham found himself singularly alone. Other young men had scores of friends; he had less than he could count upon one hand. His mother had suddenly become a shrivelled old woman. It was shocking to him to see her so. He could hope for no help from her. At Graham & Co.'s there was nobody.

Besides, he knew that, however cordial and considerate they might be, they could not help contrasting him with his father and regarding him as a mere boy whose ideas were of little importance.

The men he liked best—the ones over at the National Institute—were all specialists in their own lines and knew little or nothing about business and industrial questions.

The result of this spiritual loneliness was twofold: he was compelled to make up his own mind with regard to a variety of matters from which previously he would have shied; his mind turned constantly to Rhoda as one from whom he could learn much on subjects of which he felt himself wholly ignorant. He did not share all of Rhoda's views, but he went part way with her, would gladly have gone the whole way could he have seen it with her eyes. But the very fact that he was now his own master made him all the more hesitant. He might do what he would with his own, but he couldn't deal lightly with what belonged to others. Yet it was

clear from her letters that Rhoda regarded him now as a free agent. She had arrived at Bitumen on the day of his father's death, and her instant telegram of tenderest sympathy had been of the greatest comfort to him.

She had written several times since—letters of affection and encouragement—but he could see from their tone that her mind was full of what she saw going on about her.

If you could see the pitiful conditions that exist here among the children—the lack of decent clothing and proper food—I know your heart, dear John, already crushed with sorrow, would be wrung still more. May I add one word regarding your own relation to this situation? From what I hear of the policy of the Mid-West Coal Company in denying access to its property to union sympathizers and ejecting them by force if they manage to get their feet inside its stockade, I have no hesitation in assuring you that this is, or at any rate has been, one of the chief causes of the violence which has now become so common up and down the entire length of the Indian Branch valley. This cannot be right, John. It convinces the men that only through force can they secure their rights. The first step toward industrial peace should be an attitude of respect for law on the part of employers.

His impulse had been to send at once a telegram as president of the Mid-West Company to Warren, the general superintendent, directing him to discontinue all company police. But he immediately perceived that he had absolutely no right to do so. The Board of Directors had voted to continue their regular policy, and until they changed it he, as president, had no authority to do other than obey.

Mr. Warren had, for the first time in his business career, adopted temporizing tactics and used Thornton Graham's death as an excuse for holding the negotiations *in statu quo* until John might assume the active

direction of the company. He had not even definitely refused to have a conference with the men or their leaders; a proposition never before even entertained.

John wired Rhoda that he would do the best that he could! What a mockery the words were! If he had had nothing else to do—was not being dragged in a dozen different directions every minute of the day—he would have despaired at being able to accomplish anything; as it was, he was at his wits' end. Even if he had felt justified in doing what Rhoda had asked him to do—abandon his post, surrender his trusteeship, and start his life anew with her—he saw that it would take a long time to cut the multitude of individual threads that made up the heavy cable that bound him to his desk in Graham & Co.

Already they were yanking at the cable. The grand jury, whose term had been extended, and which had been adjourned by Judge McFadden out of consideration for John's bereavement, was about to reconvene; and the proprietor of *The Vortex* had written him a letter of condolence, adding a postscript to the effect that now John might perhaps reconsider the purchase of a part interest in that journal, his former offer of which he thereby renewed. It was not seemly that he should return immediately to the office, and yet every hour decisions of importance had to be made upon which it was necessary that he should be consulted. He was treated with a new and what seemed to him to be a profound respect by all who came to the house. The newspapers found a daily interest in front-page stories as to the probable size of the Graham fortune, the nature of its investment, the industrial conditions existing on the properties it was supposed to control, and in editorial speculations as to what sort of use he would make of it.

One trouble was that the money accumulated so much faster than it could be wisely invested in industry, or even given away; faster even than the mail that now filled knee-high the entire end of the working library, in spite of Mr. Garvey and the three assistants, who seemed to make no impression upon it whatever.

During this period Rhoda's proposed solution of his problem—a literal carrying out of Christ's direction to the rich young man—began to appeal to him strongly as the only way out of his difficulties. Wasn't she right in saying that scientific altruism dulled human sympathy and atrophied the emotions? As a member of the Board of Trustees of the Graham Foundation, while he was enthusiastic at the results achieved and at times thrilled and excited over them, he nevertheless missed something. It was all so detached and so rarefied that he did not seem to be doing anything himself at all. Didn't reason starve the purer sort of altruistic impulse? Wasn't it—at any rate for the giver—better, as Rhoda said, to give foolishly than, in default of satisfying his reason, not to give?

He often pondered these things before going to bed in his attic room. It never occurred to him to move down-stairs into a more palatial apartment, although he could easily have done so. He liked the shabby old place, where he could kick his shoes across the floor without thinking whether they were muddy or not. His mother had given him a Bible when he was a little boy, and he had tried to make a practice of reading from it every night. One part he perused over and over again:

And behold one came and said unto him, "Good master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" . . . Jesus said unto him, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven;

and come and follow me." But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, "Verily I say unto you. That a rich man shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. And again I say unto you. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God." When his disciples heard it they were exceedingly amazed, saying, "Who then can be saved?"

He wondered what Jesus had meant. If he, John Graham, could attain salvation merely by giving away all that he had to the poor, how simple it would all be. He wondered how much that rich young man had probably had. A couple of talents—four thousand dollars—at the outside. It would not be hard to give away that much to deserving poor. But how could one possibly give away a hundred millions wisely, and without doing more harm than good?

Rereading the verses with this in mind, he perceived that Christ had said nothing about the effect of the gift on the poor, but only upon the young man himself. "*If thou wilt be perfect—*" Certainly he couldn't attain Heaven by making that injunction an easy excuse to rid himself of his responsibilities. Give away all he had? If he only could! He'd ask nothing better! He could win Rhoda and Paradise at the same time. But how about the poor? You couldn't pass the buck like that! And if he should give all the money in a lump to a board of trustees, he would be merely hiring professionals to do his job for him. Christ hadn't said anything to the young man about employing settlement workers or investigators or anybody else to give away his money.

And there was also that mysterious declaration: "A rich man shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven"—"it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a



needle." Christ had certainly not meant to discourage the rich or to inflame the passions of the poor against them. Clearly what he had intended to convey was the idea that a man who, in spite of the need of others, remained rich was not qualified for Heaven. He must, as Christ had directed the young man, first give away all that he had. And right there John thought he detected the hidden subtlety of the text: if a man were cursed with great riches the problem of wisely getting rid of them might be such that he could hardly expect to solve it. Yet he was obliged to solve it if he wished salvation.

Did Rhoda's proposal offer an honorable means of escape? Her impulse was natural, well intentioned, and extremely simple. It was the revolt of youth against the injustice of youth's inheritance. But it involved as well the denial of all responsibility. It was commendable in that it had freedom and equality and brotherhood as its ideal, but it overlooked the fact that this ideal might have to be attained at somebody else's expense. "Wealth is poison," she said in effect. "Then get rid of it!" But how? Could you scatter poison broadcast throughout the community? Could you prevent its being used as an instrument of injustice or oppression merely by turning it over to another? Of course not; any more than you could reduce the danger of fire by asking some one else to hold a blazing lamp. She wanted him to cast off his shackles, to strip clean of the artificial disguise in which wealth clothes its possessor, to throw off the mask of class and enter life's race on an even toe with the rest instead of watching it at a distance.

Ah, the joy of the mere thought of it! If he could only match his brains and his will-power against those of his contemporaries in a real contest instead of one where the cards were stacked in his favor. Of course



Rhoda wished him to come to her lightheartedly and without anxiety, free to live and work like other young men who had to earn their living and make places for themselves. He did not blame her for not wanting to marry a man in danger of being demoralized by money. She might not fear a waster like her father; but how many so-called "good" rich men were there who had not by the age of fifty become, on the one hand, cynical and ruthless like Shiras, misanthropic and atrabilious like Levi—or, on the other, depressed and hyperconscientious slaves to their own wealth? Rich men were apt to be either "bounders" or "holier than thous." He despised both types, particularly the latter—sanctimonious "crape-hangers!" He could not blame Rhoda! No woman not a fool would want to run the risk of having her children ruined by money, or of having all the joy taken out of their lives by it—of marrying a man whose happiness was clouded by anxiety and suspicion and who was doomed, perhaps, to an early death through the excessive strain of responsibility—like his own father.

John knew that his father would gladly have surrendered his great wealth, and that only a sense of duty to see that it was profitably employed kept him in harness. He had not succumbed to liquor or lust, to the seductions of idleness and display. Money had not harmed him; but it had deprived him of leisure, of tranquillity, and, to a great extent, of human companionship. He had been a slave bound to the wheel. The only satisfaction he had derived from money had been a certain sense of power, and that had been more than counterbalanced by the accompanying sense of responsibility.

Indeed, when it came to power, ideas—the "imponderables"—were far more powerful than money. A speech in Congress or from a soap-box in Union Square, and

all the accumulated fortunes of the Rockefellers, the Carnegies, the Fords, and the Grahams would vanish forever.

## § 3

John shook hands with Mr. Pepperill and the latter bowed himself out, passing on his way Wallace Garvey, who now closed the door and approached his new employer with easy deference.

"I suppose, sir," he said, "you've noticed that there's been heavy selling of Mid-West common? The shorts have been hammering it all morning."

"No, I haven't looked at the tape recently," answered John. "What's happened to it?"

"It's been knocked down to sixty-seven. There was a big strike story in *The Vortex*, which probably had something to do with it."

"You saw that letter from Gideon. What do you think of his proposition?"

Mr. Garvey assumed as grave an expression as his ovular contours permitted.

"I'd think very seriously of it, Mr. Graham. If you could buy a controlling interest for anything like a million dollars I believe it would be worth while."

John lighted a cigarette and sauntered over to the window.

"How long have you known Gideon?"

"Over ten years—casually."

"What's your opinion of him?"

"Crooked as a ram's horn. But sometimes one has to deal with a crook as a matter of protection."

"I don't!" said John, wheeling suddenly.

Mr. Garvey colored. The rebuke had been so unexpected that it left him nonplussed. This was a wholly

different Mr. Graham from the diffident young man who had asked his advice about the operating report of the Mid-West Coal Company.

"Why did you come back to the hotel the morning of the directors' meeting?" John went on.

"To bring your father that telegram."

Mr. Garvey's lower lip quivered.

"Why didn't you give it to him before breakfast?"

"Because it hadn't been delivered. I met the boy on the steps of Forty-seven when I left you."

John stepped to the table and lifting a pad disclosed the telegram lying beneath.

"It was received at ten-ten the evening before at the Murray Hill office," said he. "It's a fast day message. It should have been sent over to the house within ten minutes."

"There must have been some hitch," replied the secretary nervously. "The family were all away. Perhaps the boy tried to deliver it but the servants had gone to bed."

"Did you sign for it in the morning?"

"I think so—yes, I'm certain that I did."

John took from his inside pocket a telegraph messenger's receipt book, which he opened.

"If you will look at your signature," he said quietly, "you will see that you signed for that telegram at ten twenty-three P. M. It's true you met the boy on the steps, but it was the night before. You already had the telegram when you came to the *Diana*. In a word, Garvey, you are a liar! You came back to the hotel by prearrangement to pose as a witness to an imaginary conversation between my father and Gideon. As I said, I don't deal with crooks. The cashier will hand you a check for your salary to the end of the month. You are

discharged. I do not wish ever to see you again. I think I know who has been selling Mid-West short."

Mr. Wallace Garvey's face had turned to marble. He did not reply for at least half a minute. Then with perfect composure he said:

"You are doing me a great injustice. You are entirely wrong about the telegram. I got it in the morning."

"The messenger remembers handing you the telegram and Brophy saw him do so besides. He is in the next room. Would you like to question him?"

A venomous look came into the secretary's eyes, which he quickly suppressed.

"Mr. Graham," he said after a pause, "I've worked loyally for your family for six years. I know many things that are of vital importance to you, that concern the honor of your family and the reputation of its members. No one else has been so intimately concerned with their affairs. If I go——"

"You will go!" said John, moving toward him.

Mr. Garvey still hesitated.

"I feel sure that you will be inclined to reconsider your action after you have had time to think it over more calmly. I am devoted to your interests and to you personally——"

"That's enough, Garvey!" said John. "You'd better get out!"

"As you please," said Mr. Garvey with a bow; "but if you should want me——"

"I'll call up Jake Gideon!" completed John.

Providence has, as has already been several times intimated, put its sign manual upon the Graham features in what is technically known as the "maxilla," otherwise the jaw. It was the one thing, together with the quality of determination or obstinacy popularly associated with

it, that all the Grahams possessed in common. To Mr. Garvey, at the moment of his retirement, his erstwhile employer's face seemed all chin with two flashing blue points above it.

"The swine!" muttered the owner of the chin as the ex-secretary vanished through the door. Then he gave a short laugh and lighted another cigarette.

"Gosh! Look at it!" he exclaimed, regarding the indicia of millions lying before him on the table. On the wall opposite hung the portraits of his grandfather and great-grandfather—old Ezra and Mungo; the one lean, thin-lipped, with the burning eyes of a Malachi, inexorable; the other rubicund, with fat jowls, comfortable, worldly.

"You're to blame for this!" he remarked, without taking the trouble to differentiate between them. Then his eyes fell to where Degoutet's bust of Thornton Graham now stood in the space between. It was as if his father were standing there gazing at him—kindly, honest, firm, courageous.

"I did my bit!" his eyes seemed to say. "Now, Jacko, do yours!"



## CHAPTER XVII

### CONFESSION WITHOUT ABSOLUTION

SINCE Thornton's death they had formed the habit of having their meals served up-stairs in Toto's room. Here his mother spent all her time. Life seemed suddenly to have ended for her. She realized now how unimportant that little life of hers had been in the general scheme of the household. She had been merely Thornton Graham's wife, and now she was Thornton Graham's widow, a dowager, a nonentity, for she had sacrificed herself entirely to him just as he had sacrificed himself to his duty. He had paid, and she was now paying. Curiously, she found Toto braver than she was. The girl showed an unexpected and admirable cheerfulness, and her mother came to rely upon her crippled daughter for courage to face the daily routine.

Slowly the household readjusted itself to the new order of things. John had stepped quietly into his father's place, and they all found themselves revolving about him—the new head of Graham & Co. For when anybody spoke now of "Mr. Graham" they referred to John. Thorny, after begging to be allowed to leave college immediately and enter the banking house, had reluctantly returned to Cambridge to finish his term. Ditty's school was nearly over, and it was getting so hot in the city that John proposed that as soon as practicable his mother should open the house at Frigate Head and take Toto and the two younger ones up there for the summer. It would be hopeless for him to attempt to



take any regular vacation, but he might perhaps get off for a few days in September. Meantime, the best he could do would be to steal away from the city for an occasional week-end with them all at Mt. Desert. It was accordingly so arranged and Tom Bevin duly notified that Holiday Cove would not be opened that season.

One evening after dinner John asked his mother to come down into the den while he smoked his pipe. The room was exactly as Thornton had left it, the brightly varnished model of the *Diana* standing in its cradle on the work-table, complete to the last gaff and halliard. John held his mother tightly as he led her to the old sofa in the corner where his father used to sit and smoke. It was the first time that he had suggested going in there since his father's death, and something in his demeanor told her alert sense that he had something upon his mind. It would not be surprising if he had, poor boy! She felt that she had been selfish in surrendering so utterly to her own grief. She must try to be of help to him. After all, he was only twenty-seven.

"Well, dear," she said after he had filled his pipe from the glass jar of tobacco that always stood on the end of the work-table, "how is your job going?"

John, facing his mother, lighted his pipe with great care.

"Pretty well, I guess. But there's an awful lot of it!"

He seemed years older than six weeks before, his face narrower, his eyes more serious and penetrating, his mouth firmer; more like his father than ever. Tears of pride and of pity welled to her eyes. A great surge of mother love swept from her to him. He felt it and smiled—with a touch of wistfulness.

"You mustn't work too hard, dear," she said.

"No fear of that!" he assured her. Then he sat down beside her and took one of her hands. "Mumsey," he said in an artificially confidential tone, "do you remember when I was a little boy at Frigate Head—long before I went to college—I told you how I'd got stuck on the precipice path on Newport Mountain and a funny little kid, with freckles and braids, bucked me up and made me go along?"

"I think so—dimly," she answered, puzzled at the apparent irrelevancy of such a reminiscence. "I know we were always afraid you would wander up there and fall off."

"I guess I didn't tell you at the time, but she saved my life. I couldn't possibly have got up the precipice if it hadn't been for her."

An uneasy fear crept into Jean's heart, like the chill current of air that steals along the ground before a fog. Apprehensive, she waited without answering.

"I met her a few weeks ago—grown up, of course. Funny coincidence, wasn't it? We recognized each other immediately."

Instinctively her mind leaped to the correct inference. Something paralyzed her speech. He was embarrassed by her lack of response, found his disclosure harder to make than he had expected. He had assured himself of her sympathy; now somehow he was not so sure of it.

"The reason it seemed funny, mother, was because in all that time I'd never really forgotten her at all—nearly fifteen years!"

He felt his mother shrink.

"Mother dear! You remember Kipling's 'Brushwood Boy'? Well, it was like that. You see, I'd thought of her and dreamed of her so often it didn't seem as if any time had passed at all since that day on the cliff. We

met at the Vortex School. I dropped in there one afternoon just out of curiosity. I've seen her quite often since. I—mother! Mother darling! I——”

Jean stroked his hair. He had plunged a barb into her breast, but, after all, why should she complain?

“Who is she, dear?”

“Oh, mother! She's wonderful! So brave! And lovely, mother!”

“But her name, John?”

“Rhoda McLane.”

Mrs. Graham stiffened.

“Rhoda McLane!” she echoed. “You don't mean Randolph McLane's daughter! The one in the divorce case, who went to jail!”

“She didn't go to jail!”

“Practically! Those terrible McLanes! Oh, John! What would your father have said?”

“But Rhoda isn't like her father and mother. She's the sweetest, noblest girl in the world!” he cried.

“I never imagined that anything like this could happen,” she replied. “Those people are outside the pale of decent society. They're practically criminal!”

“Mr. McLane is one of the directors of the Mid-West Coal Company,” he protested.

“But that is business,” answered his mother.

“I don't see any particular difference. Anyhow, Rhoda's no criminal!”

Jean bit her lips.

“I didn't mean to suggest—oh, John—you hardly know this girl! Don't—don't keep up the acquaintance! You can't understand what a connection of that sort would mean! These people are rotten to the core! They've led shameful lives! Think what it would mean if we—the Grahams—were connected with them in any

way whatever! It would look as if we approved of them and what they have done!"

John did not answer for a moment. When he did, his voice bore a challenge.

"What you say, mumsey, makes me feel as if it would be wrong not to see her again. She's the victim of circumstances over which she hasn't the slightest control!"

"Listen to me, John dear," said Jean soothingly. "Don't think because the Declaration of Independence says everybody is created equal that they are. They're not! Some are born male and some female; some strong and some crippled; some with good blood and some with bad; and each has to live his life with the handicap he was born with. And in the same way each of us has his individual responsibilities that he can't escape. You have the task of proving to the world that the old ideas—of property and government—that we've always believed in and followed are right and that society had best go on in that way. You can't do as you choose any more than your father could. You must consider everything—including your possible marriage—in its relation to society."

"So you think that if I keep on seeing Rhoda McLane it will endanger the social fabric?" he asked bitterly.

"Don't be annoyed with me, dear! Of course it won't, but it might easily tend to shake the confidence the public feels in men like your father and your grandfather. Such men demonstrate the value of individualism; men like Randolph McLane its viciousness."

"Then we're all of us slaves!" he retorted. "If I can't marry the girl I love——"

His mother winced.

"You did not say you were in love with her."

"I love her with all my heart and soul!"

He slipped to his knees and put his arms around her.

"Mother, dear! Nobody can ever be to me what you have been. When you know Rhoda you'll love her just as much as I do."

Jean took his hands.

"John," she said, and her voice was dead, "you are, of course, free to do as you choose; but if you marry this girl I shan't get over it. Such a marriage would nearly kill me! It would drag our name in the gutter!"

"Then," he answered proudly, "I'll put it back where it belongs again. I don't even know she'll have me. But if she will I'll marry her, mother. No one shall come between us!"

"If she will! Are you crazy, John? Do you think there is any girl who wouldn't marry you if she had the chance?"

"Do you mean that every woman is after money?"

"In these days," she answered.

"I'm glad you made that qualification," he shot back at her with good-natured irony. "After all, you married my father!"

## CHAPTER XVIII

### UNDER THE CONSTITUTION

THE adjourned term of the grand jury's service was drawing to a close. The weather was getting hot, and the pools of water standing in the choked gutters of Franklin Street steamed in the June sun. The smell of rank cigars and of ripe bananas fused in the corridors with that of "prisoners' lunch."

The grand jury sat coatless with handkerchiefs in their collars—"sore" to a man. What the dickens was it all about? Several hundred witnesses had been examined and a few indictments had been found against inconspicuous unfortunates who had incidentally become entangled in the net of the law, one or two fester spots on the East Side had been closed up, but in the large nothing whatever had been accomplished save that twenty-three gentlemen who would otherwise have been busy with their own affairs had been forced to sit in a murky chamber overlooking the Tombs and listen for two months to: "Well, I can't say I *seen* it myself exactly, but——" in fifty different keys.

Yet every day *The Vortex* declared that the city was getting better and better and continued to herald the sterling qualities and self-sacrificing public spirit of John Graham, the world's best millionaire.

His mother's opposition obliterated for the moment the misunderstanding between Rhoda and John so far as he was concerned. He loved his mother, her disap-



proval depressed him; yet it also aroused his obstinacy. Wasn't there any phase of life in which he could escape the numbing influence of his wealth? If he couldn't love where he chose, good God—— Well—and how about God? Was it permissible to exercise his own mind about Him? Or did the influence that his religious opinions might possibly exert on a sycophantic public require him to pussyfoot in realms celestial also?

Puffing at his pipe, he stared hard at Johnny the Bear, as if hoping to find comfort in the latter's ursine philosophy. When you came right down to it, they were both more or less in the same pickle—Johnny the Bear hooked helplessly by his middle to the chandelier, and Johnny Myself equally in the air and—for the moment at least—equally helpless. He blew a cloud of smoke at the woolly brute, who swayed and began to revolve. Anyhow, he'd not be like that—a weathercock—turning in a new direction with every fresh breath of opinion. What did Rhoda know about it? He must have ideas of his own. The very permanency of Graham & Co. showed—did it not?—that its business was founded on a rock. How silly to question the principles by which American progress had been achieved and American civilization safeguarded!

But the next morning the papers carried stories of increasing disorder in the bituminous coal regions. A mine guard in the employ of another company had been killed while dispersing a meeting on corporation property. It had an ominous sound, and throughout the sessions of the grand jury and the directors' meetings that he subsequently attended that day there was an undercurrent of anxiety in John's thoughts.

One morning a few days after his talk with his mother he found in the "Personal" box a letter bearing the

postmark "Bitumen." She loved him, else she would not be writing to him! She must know in her heart that what she had demanded was impossible! But as he read, his hope changed to disappointment:

Dear John, I hardly know how to write to you. Your telegram saying that you would do the best that you could filled me with discouragement. For, of course, you are in a position to do everything. Now that you are at the head of the Mid-West Coal Company, you alone are responsible for its policy and the illegal acts of its officers.

Yesterday I, with the president of Local 87, Mr. Sid Halloran, took the train to Graham. When we stepped on the platform, two men in holster and cartridge belt accosted us, and rather roughly inquired our business. Mr. Halloran replied that he wished to hold a public meeting. At that one of the men said:

"We know you. You can't hold any meeting on this property."

"I'm not going to hold it on your property," said Mr. Halloran. "I'm going to hold it on the public highway in front of the post-office."

"You can't do that—the post-office belongs to us and is on company property," answered the man. "There is no place here for you to hold it, and you won't hold it!"

"I will unless I am prevented by force," replied Mr. H.

We left the platform and as we walked along the road, these men fell in on either side of us. You can't imagine how humiliated and angry I was, John. When we reached the post-office Mr. Halloran stopped.

"Keep moving!" ordered one of the men. "We are not going to have any disorder here!"

Mr. Halloran said, "I shall stay here as long as I see fit." At that the man told him that he was under arrest and took him to the jail. Why they didn't take me, too, I don't know. After an hour's delay he was brought before a justice of the peace, who is not only the postmaster but is also employed in the store of the Mid-West Coal Company. Mr. Halloran was fined three dollars, but sentence was suspended on condition that he get out of town.

"I want a trial!" he said. "I won't get out of town, and I won't pay the three dollars."

"Well, you don't have to; it's all over!" said the judge-post-master-storekeeper.

"I won't take a verdict of guilty!" repeated Mr. H.

"Then I find you not guilty!"—and the judge looked around the room and everybody began to laugh. Then they adjourned court and the first thing I knew, there was a crowd of men about us and we were being hustled toward the station. I was nearly out of my mind with shame. If I had not gone, they would have dragged me! And on that court-house floated the Stars and Stripes!

John saw red. To prevent free access to a public highway was illegal, and involved assault and false imprisonment. He would stop that sort of thing whether it was in line with the company's policy or not. Within half an hour, without consulting any of the officers or directors, he sent two telegrams. The first was to Warren, the vice-president in charge of operations:

Instruct company police to offer no interference to citizens desiring access to public highway or the other places not company property for all legal uses, including the holding of public meetings. This company must stand for due observance of the law.

JOHN GRAHAM, President.

The other telegram was to Rhoda, quoting the first. Before five o'clock that afternoon he had received replies from both of them: Rhoda congratulating him on his stand; Warren asking him to hold the matter in abeyance until he reached New York the following morning. The first cheered, the latter angered him. However, Warren had been fifteen years with the company, and was entitled to a hearing. He found him an unassuming little man, who took the wind entirely out of John's sails by professing the most intense sympathy with the men and concern for their welfare. He had been a miner, had

belonged to the union, had in time saved enough to go into business for himself, and knew the game from heading to tippie. He assured John that to yield a fraction of an inch in their no-conference policy would spell disaster, and that to permit union sympathizers upon the Mid-West Company's property, or the highway adjacent to it, would precipitate not only a strike but inevitable violence and bloodshed. They were pursuing the only practical policy. John, stumped by the little man's quiet conviction, told him to sit down, and offered him a cigar.

"Look here, Mr. Warren," he said, "what I've got on my mind is something like this. My great-uncles Shiras and Levi, and myself, have got fifteen millions invested out in Bitumen. Shiras is eighty, Levi is seventy-eight. They're each worth at least fifty millions and they don't do anything much but sit around and try to be comfortable. Well, Heaven knows, *I* don't need any more money!

"There are over three thousand men out in Bitumen giving their lives to getting out coal that none of us particularly want. They claim they have such grievances as to make them willing to go out on strike and risk losing their jobs and their savings, and we say: 'We won't even discuss them with you. If you don't like the way we run things you can get out.' I'd want to be awfully sure they haven't got any just grievances before I said that, Mr. Warren."

The vice-president nodded sympathetically. John went on:

"Of course, I know they aren't interested in costs. Why should they be? They're only interested in wages. But here are three thousand men with their backs to us, and here are two old men and a young man with their

backs to the men. I want all of us to turn around. I want to reach those men out in No Man's Land somehow. I want to get across to them if I can. I want them to get all that's coming to them. What's the sense of Great-uncle Levi's giving a community house to Pottsville Center, New York, if he has to get the money by cutting down on some miner's buddy out in West Virginia?"

"To negotiate with those fellows would be tantamount to recognizing the union," said Mr. Warren.

"There's no more reason that I can see for refusing to listen to a coal-miner who says his job isn't safe," retorted John, "than for refusing to listen to your stenographer who says her machine is broken."

Mr. Warren listened with courtesy and apparent interest.

"I'd like to know who says the Mid-West Coal Company ever refused to listen to a complaint of that sort! It's the kind of complaint we're looking for. And when we get it we try to locate the responsibility and fire the guilty party. We can do that as we're fixed now. But if we had the union in there do you know what would happen? The union wouldn't let us fire anybody. If we tried to fire a union man who'd endangered the life of a fellow member by violating the safety laws they'd go on strike!— Now, as to the present situation there's one element you've left out entirely."

"What is that?"

"The fact that they're trying to force the closed shop on you."

"They haven't as yet."

"They will."

"Well," said John, "I'll cross the bridge when I get to it."



Warren shrugged his shoulders.

"If you do—you'll be lucky!" he declared.

He laid down his cigar.

"However, as you say, Mr. Graham, we haven't reached that bridge as yet. But we'll be there precious quick if I have to carry out your order."

"It is going to be carried out, Mr. Warren! Either by you or somebody in your place," said John with significance.

Mr. Warren seemed unperturbed.

"What you object to, as I understand it," he replied, "is that we are doing something illegal in keeping these organizers off our property."

"Off the property of the public—the county highway!" corrected John.

"All right," said Mr. Warren. "It ain't necessary. Our lawyers got busy right off and fixed that up." He pulled out from his pocket two sheets of paper. "I got our local board to pass an ordinance right off like what they have over in Pango—it's been held constitutional—providing that nobody can hold a public meeting inside the limits of the town of Graham without an order from the mayor. And then our lawyers went to Judge Monks and got an injunction from him prohibiting Halloran and all other union officials or organizers, their agents or attorneys, from attempting by public meeting or otherwise to induce any miner to break his contract with us by which he has agreed not to join a labor union."

"Do we actually have that sort of a contract?" asked John.

"Sure, we have to. It goes fifty-fifty. We on our side agree not to employ any member of a labor organization."

The heir to the Graham millions swung his chair so



that he faced in the opposite direction, and Mr. Warren thought that he heard something like profanity.

"So now," concluded the manager, "we've got 'em coming and going, and it's absolutely legal. The only way they can get on our property is by an aeroplane, and then they can't 'light! If any of those fellows try it, they'll go to jail, and we can call on the United States government to help keep them there!"

He looked across at John as if to say: "Pretty damn good, eh?"

John arose and walked over to the window.

"Suppose I should tell you to tear up that ordinance and the injunction?" he asked after a long pause.

"Then I'd resign, Mr. Graham, as I said. I'd have to. I couldn't be responsible for the company any longer and expect it to pay dividends. But," he added, "I don't think you would have any right to give me any such order. What I have done is in accord with our established policy. And when that policy ceases to be the policy of the board of directors of the Mid-West Coal Company Jo Warren ceases to be its 'vice-president in charge of operations'!"

## CHAPTER XIX

### BOLSHEVIKI

WASHINGTON SQUARE was still flooded with the afternoon sunlight as John turned into the Mews, through the iron gateway that marked the beginning of the row of stuccoed studios. Rhoda had returned to New York without letting him know and without replying to the letters in which he sought to explain that what perhaps had seemed to her like a reversal of his position was in reality something different, or at any rate something over which he had no control.

John had called a meeting of the board of directors of the Mid-West, who, having listened to what both he and Mr. Warren had to say, had passed a resolution by a vote of fifteen to two commending the latter's acts in the interest of "legality" and re-approving its ancient policy. He had telegraphed a full account of this to Rhoda, expressing his disappointment, but had heard nothing from her until, learning by accident that she was in the city, he had caught her on the telephone at the studio.

The voice with which she replied to his passionate inquiries as to what was the matter was cold. She was very busy, she said, and really had no time to see anybody. He insisted, and it was at length arranged that he might call that afternoon. She was clearly of the opinion that he had played her false and that the telegram he had sent to Warren had been merely a trick. How could he ever persuade her that it was not? How could he make her see that as a minority stockholder he

could not direct the company's policies or be held responsible for them? She had done what the world always did—lumped him in with all the rest of the Grahams; was holding him to account for the acts of his two fossilised old great-uncles!

An Italian, steering a shop-worn monkey by means of a cord fastened to its waist, was playing "The Irish Washerwoman" on a toothless barrel-organ in front of the Dana house. The Italian was young and ingratiating, the monkey middle-aged and sophisticated, and the organ senile; but because Rhoda had come back and he was going to see her, the smile of the young organ-grinder aroused a sympathetic feeling in John's heart, and he fumbled in his pocket for a piece of change. Beaming, the Italian loosened the coil on the top of the organ and allowed the monkey to range toward him.

But with his hand in his pocket John was annoyed by the realization that he was about to commit a social wrong. Street begging was something to be frowned upon. He ought not to encourage it. The Italian was grinning affectionately, the monkey was already tipping his diminutive cap and chattering expectantly. John wanted to give him something just because his master was such a happy-looking rascal, communicating a delightful sense of vagabondage and irresponsibility.

"Oh, thunder!" muttered John, defiantly dropping the dime into the monkey's cap. Yet the fact that he was violating the basic principle of philanthropy clouded what would otherwise have been an emotional satisfaction.

A further disappointment greeted him, for he found the studio full of people. He had assumed that Rhoda would receive him alone, and the discovery that she apparently wished to avoid doing so was the severest

blow his pride had yet received. Her manner as she greeted him was the same as usual, but she instantly rejoined the group about the tea-table and sought to draw him into the conversation. Of all things in the world he most loathed a tea-party, and his annoyance at this one was heightened by the fact that Professor Schirmer, the protagonist of the Vortex School incident, was there "with bells on." After what the lecturer had said about Rhoda's family from the public platform, John thought his presence excruciatingly bad taste. But the girl herself did not seem to harbor any such feeling toward the socialist. Rather, her attitude toward him struck John as one of unnecessary deference.

Once his eyes had got used to the subdued light he saw that there were not so many there after all: Cecily Coutant; Degoutet; a kittenish middle-aged woman, in whom he recognized Miss Antoinette Smythe, a salaried settlement-worker, and a sleek, sallow youth, in soft shirt and shell-rimmed spectacles, who evidently was a friend of Professor Schirmer's.

John was physically repelled by this youth's slightly bald, filbert-shaped head, his protuberant, translucent ears, his sharp, shifting eyes, flat nose, and fledgling neck, irritated by his air of intellectual condescension. He was cocksure, omniscient, and glib, with a technical vocabulary wholly unintelligible to poor John, who could not for the life of him understand why, without the slightest desire to be controversial or anything but polite, he found himself forced somehow into an attitude of apology for his own existence. He distrusted the fellow's volubility as much as he was offended by his soiled collar. In justice, it should be said for Mr. Lefkowitz, that he was almost as contemptuous of those whose general opinions he shared as he was of the rest of the world.

On hearing the name of the new arrival he subsided with a shrug of his bottle shoulders.

John's feeble attempt at cheerful conversation died on his lips. The trivialities of social intercourse had obviously no place in a gathering honored by such intellects as those of Messrs. Schirmer and Lefkowitz. The atmosphere seemed charged with a vague resentment. John could not make out at first what it was they were all so resentful about. Even Miss Smythe radiated short wave-lengths of it. Degoutet watched them sardonically from behind a screen of cigarette smoke.

"Something of a *contretemps*," remarked Schirmer *sotto voce* to Miss Coutant, with obvious reference to what he assumed to be John's unexpected appearance; and there followed a moment when the wheel of conversation hung on dead centre, nobody wishing to assume the responsibility of starting it. Then the lecturer, caressing his chin, looked quizzically at John.

"Well," he said, "how do you feel about the coal situation now?"

John smiled darkly at him.

"I know so little about it," he replied, "that I can hardly form an opinion. I wish——"

"I suppose there are people on the operators' side who are sufficiently interested to know something about it?" ventured Schirmer.

His tone put John on edge. By what right did these men take it upon themselves to assume this attitude of hostile criticism? It was his first scent of the "class struggle" by virtue of which Professor Schirmer, Mr. Lefkowitz, and also, to a certain extent, Miss Smythe earned a fairly good living, drawing sustenance from both sides and participating in the spoils of victory without taking actual part in the combat or sharing any of its risks.



John strove to keep his temper.

"I suppose there are," he replied dryly.

Mr. Lefkowitz made a whistling sound through his teeth and glanced around the circle.

"That's illuminating!" he scoffed. "Are conditions ever going to be changed when the people owning the mines take that attitude?"

"Oh, Mr. Lefkowitz!" protested Miss Smythe, who was embarrassed, since she drew her salary from an organization supported in large part by the Grahams, while at the same time arraying herself on the side of the "socially wronged." "I'm sure Mr. Graham did not mean to imply that he took no interest in the conflict between the miners and the operators. He only, as I understood him, did not wish to express an opinion on a subject concerning which he did not feel himself sufficiently informed."

"That's rather an easy way to pass the buck, isn't it?" retorted Schirmer. "There's got to be some responsibility taken somewhere."

"For what?" demanded John indignantly. "You gentlemen are apparently trying to pick a quarrel with me! I came in for a pleasant half-hour over a cup of tea. I didn't know you were here; if I had perhaps I shouldn't have come. This coal strike is no concern of mine, although it considerably heightens my difficulties. These men needn't have struck in the first place. They could go back to work to-day if they wanted to. I can't say I have a great deal of sympathy for their distress when they brought it on themselves, and they needn't have struck just at the beginning of the cold weather if they expected to keep warm."

"When do you suggest that they should strike?" asked Professor Schirmer. "When nobody wants coal?"



At some dull time in the industry when you could let them go without loss or inconvenience?"

"But why should any of them strike?" asked John. "None of our men have struck. That district has been operated successfully without any recognition of the union for over twenty years. The men there have averaged two hundred and sixty days' work against something like a hundred in the unionized fields. They've never complained."

"Have you ever given them a chance to?" retorted Schirmer. "What chance to keep his job would a miner have who went to the superintendent with a complaint? If he wasn't thrown out bodily by a pair of huskies, he'd be told that if he didn't like the way things were run he could get out of there."

"But that isn't so!" John protested. "Any man can make a complaint, and if he isn't satisfied can take the matter to the superintendent. And otherwise the men are fully protected by law in every way."

"The laws are absolutely a dead letter," broke in Lefkowitz. "A man who tried to go behind the boss would find himself halfway down the gully when he woke up, if he ever did wake up! Let me tell you this: so long as a corporation won't discuss grievances with its men—won't listen to 'em at all—ignores them and treats them like a lot of cattle—it will get what it deserves."

"You certainly can't think it right to refuse even to hear what the men have to say!" said Miss Coutant.

"It doesn't seem so to me!" bravely echoed Miss Smythe, seeing the battle swinging to that side.

"Of course I don't!" he protested. "But there's nothing I can do——"

"Have you been out to Bitumen yet?" interrupted Professor Schirmer.

"No," admitted John, all the more furious because he could not with decency state his reasons. "I—I haven't had the time."

Lefkowitz withered him.

"This is mediæval!" he remarked with conscious self-control.

"I suppose vice-hunting is more amusing," sneered Schirmer, protruding his Adam's apple. "But if you could spare a day or two to look into conditions out there you might find something quite as interesting on your own properties."

"Those who refuse to discuss peace must accept the responsibility for war," declared Lefkowitz. "And," he added with significance, "the war will be without quarter for those who are to blame for it."

The studio had unexpectedly become a criminal court in which John found himself in the dock without any of the ordinary rights generally accorded to the accused, and denied the presumption of innocence. His self-constituted prosecutors, having indicted and condemned, were now threatening him with punishment. Who were these presuming "smart Alecs" who were shouldering themselves uninvited into his affairs? By what right were they acting as inquisitors? He had been perfectly polite to them when he came in. Why was Rhoda turning on him like this? He wasn't to blame for the general situation out in Bitumen. Why the devil, if they knew so much about it, didn't they go out there and run the mines themselves? And yet he acknowledged readily enough it didn't lie in his mouth to say that they ought to go there so long as he didn't go himself. He was, as the lawyers say, "estopped."

"Good Lord!" suddenly exploded Degoutet, who had been sprawling on his elbows at the end of a refectory

table. "Who gave *you* chaps the job of setting the world straight? I know you! We eat the same rotten grub and drink the same red ink in the strictly kosher Italian restaurants in the Eighth Street basements. You know just about as much about how to run a coal business as you do about making a statue! Why don't you read a few books and then come over to my studio and tell me how to work?"

Lefkowitz's sallow face wore a puzzled smirk. It seemed to infuriate the sculptor.

"The trouble with you," he shouted, "is that you want what you haven't got! You try to stir up a mess in the hope that you can grab something off. Anyhow, whether you succeed or not, you have the fun of taking the joy out of life for somebody else. Who the devil *are* you? Do you ever *do* anything? No, you're just a lot of hot-air artists! Bah! If I want another man's money or another man's wife, I take 'em. I don't try to invent some new theory of property or free love so as to get away with it. But you fellows want full police protection before you start anything!"

"One moment!" interrupted Schirmer angrily. "I won't——"

Degoutet waved him aside.

"How you are able to put it across beats me! It's just because people are too easy-going and too polite. You don't even condescend to tell us what the trouble is. You merely say something's wrong and we'd jolly well better find out what it is and fix it up before you get after us. I can sympathize with a hard-working citizen who's been sick or in tough luck and want's somebody else's dinner to keep from starving. But not your kind! I'd sooner take the opinion of somebody of experience—like Hoover or Edison or Henry Ford, even

—than a disgruntled intellectual who never got nearer a day's work than the library of Columbia or City College."

"Stop this!" cried Schirmer, getting to his feet. "Can't you behave yourself like a gentleman?"

"Bah!" sneered Degoutet. "Who are you? Where do you come from? I don't know. You may be full-blooded Americans whose fathers conquered the wilderness! But personally I wasn't born here; I first saw the light in a lying-in hospital in Odessa. And I consider myself damn well treated to be allowed to stay here and trim the suckers who buy my statues. There's no such pickings elsewhere, believe me!"

He bristled at the other two like a black Highland terrier. The sculptor had deliberately deprived them of their unfair advantage by going them one better and substituting brutality for rudeness. But it did the trick. He took a step toward them.

Schirmer, pale with rage, backed away from him, while Lefkowitz remained seated, smiling nervously as if he were afraid that this whiskered outlaw might have a knife in the pocket of his baggy trousers.

"Well, don't let's get into a row about it!" he protested, as if soothing an unreasonable child. "There's no need of violence!"

"Why not?" bawled Degoutet. "*Let's* get into a row about it! *Let's* have a little violence. *You* talk enough about violence. Let's have a little red stuff right here."

Professor Schirmer turned hastily to Cecily.

"I'm sorry this has happened, Miss Coutant. I naturally didn't expect to precipitate anything of the kind when I accepted your invitation to bring Mr. Lefkowitz to tea."

He shook hands with his hostess and then with Rhoda. Lefkowitz did the same.

"We shall meet on the train, then?" Schirmer asked her.

Rhoda nodded.

"Yes—at one o'clock. We have opposite sections, haven't we?"

John stared at her. Before he could speak, however, Schirmer faced him.

"As to this vice business, Mr. Graham," he said, warningly, "don't forget that a great many women are driven into what is called an immoral life by their inability to earn a living wage, and that this is directly due to the capitalistic system of which you are so distinguished a representative. In studying a disease the causes should not be overlooked. That is just as true of cities as it is of coal mines."

But John was not thinking of either coal mines or cities. Where was Rhoda going with this socialist? What secret did they have together in which he did not share?

"Those fellows make me sick!" snorted Degoutet as the door closed behind the departing guests. "It makes a difference whose ox is gored!"

"I think you were very rude to them, Raoul!" said Cecily. "It was shameful of you."

"Bunk!" retorted the sculptor. "They make a business of trying to upset everything—industry, art, society—yet the minute they get a dose of their own medicine they're the first to call upon law, order, and convention for protection. They preach self-expression, but they expect everybody else to express themselves exactly as they do. Now I'm just as much for chucking the conventions as they are. I don't claim to be altruistic, as



they do. But at least I'm sufficiently on the level so that if I see fit to spit in a man's face I don't find it necessary to call an officer if he spits back at me. Well, so long, Cecily! Au 'voir, Johnny. Drop in on your way home!"

He slouched out. Cecily got up and began collecting the cups and saucers. Miss Smythe assisted her.

"Rhoda," said John, "what do you propose to do?"

She gave him a look of cool defiance that wounded him.

"I'm going back to Bitumen."

"With that fellow?"

She gave a shrug of scorn as if to indicate that she did not regard it as any business of his *who* she went with. This was a new Rhoda.

"Professor Schirmer is going out there on the same train."

John arose to his feet. He was hurt, indignant, angry.

"I don't know what has come over you!" he cried. "It's that fellow Schirmer, I bet. He's filled you up with a whole lot of twaddle—most of it absolutely false! And who's this patronizing friend of yours—Mr. Lefkowitz?"

"Mr. Lefkowitz is the editor of *The Vortex*."

John threw up his hands.

"*The Vortex* is nothing but a blackmailing yellow journal. What a bunch for you to be mixed up with! A lot of greasy intelligentsia."

"Isn't it rather narrow-minded of you to scoff at these 'greasy intelligentsia,' as you call them? Don't you think that on the whole they deserve a good deal of credit for what they've made of themselves? And at least they're sincere!"

There was a barb in her last word. He ground his



teeth. It was cruel, but if she were ready to believe it of him, further efforts to undeceive her would be useless.

"Oh, I suppose they're all right enough in their way. It's just your going around with them at all! You're in a different class!"

"Who am I to go with if the members of my own class lie down on their job?"

She was not yielding an inch.

"Who says they're lying down on their job? Schirmer? Lefkowitz? Have they ever been in the coal business? Why take their word for it?"

"I do not have to take their word for it," she said. "I have been there and seen the conditions with my own eyes. I've been kicked off your property as if I were a woman of bad character!"

Was he to lose her forever? This girl whom he loved more than his life—even his honor.

"Rhoda, that is ungenerous of you. I did everything I could."

"You lulled me into thinking you were trying to help, and then under cover of your telegram you took steps to make things even worse than they were!"

"Rhoda! You can't think that!" Every drop of blood in his body was pleading for her faith in him. "I swear to you that it is not so. The general manager did that. I knew nothing whatever about it. I was disgusted and chagrined at those legal tricks—those technicalities. But the directors voted me down just as I wired you."

His words carried conviction.

"Well, I'll accept your explanation, but I don't see that anything is being done about meeting the men half-way. Warren is just playing for time, fooling along, and

deceiving them into thinking that something is going to be done.

"Something shall be done!" he declared. "There's to be another directors' meeting to-morrow morning. I'll make them agree to a more liberal policy. After all, it's something to be president of the company. They'll have to listen to me. Can't you bring more pressure to bear upon your own father?"

"My father!"—scornfully.

"Yes, why not?"

"My father never listened to a complaint from a workman in his life. That's how, he claims, he made such a success in the steel business."

"Well," he answered, "there are plenty of other directors—my two great-uncles, for example. If I can get them to side with me we can swing the meeting. I wish I were going out to Bitumen with you."

"Why don't you come?" she retorted. "At what hour is the meeting?"

"Eleven o'clock to-morrow morning."

"Well, the train doesn't leave until one."

"Just give me this one chance, Rhoda!" he begged. "Let me prove my sincerity to you!"

She hesitated. With his chin set, his dark-blue eyes flashing, his hair awry, he had never looked more beautiful to her.

"All right!" she said finally. "Carry your resolution in the directors' meeting to-morrow and I'll go with you."

"Hurrah!" he cried. "You'll see, Rhoda! From now on we'll fight side by side!"

He was the young knight, lance in rest, about to sweep before him all the powers of evil. A belated ray of the Greenwich Village sun fell through the leaded pane of the lattice and touched his hair with a faint nimbus.

How young, in fact, he was! How ignorant of the world. And how he loved her! That she couldn't for an instant doubt. All of pity, all of motherhood, all of passion that was in her welled upward. He held out his arms.

"Rhoda!"

It was all that she could do to keep from surrendering herself and, as she believed, her cause as well.

"No, John," she said. "We've come to the fork in the road. You must choose now which you'll take. This must be the final test."

He saw that she was in earnest.

"Very well, dear! I've chosen!"

She gave him her hand, and he pressed it to his cheeks and lips.

"You'll see, Rhoda—nothing shall stand against us!"

She watched him with eyes of tenderness as he swung down the Mews on his way to victory.

## CHAPTER XX

### JACK THE GIANT KILLER

WE forget precisely how the Jack of nursery lore slew his giants, but had John been able to slay Giant Shiras and Giant Levi in like manner, other giants, by virtue of the laws of inheritance, would have arisen in their stead. And this could go on forever! The fate of men perpetually dependent upon the whim or prejudice of an invalid, a paranoiac, or a moron!

Our Jack the Giant Killer had yet to learn that it is harder to hack one's way through a swamp of alders than a stockade of oak; and that stormy as is the sea of passion and prejudice, it is far easier to cross than the smiling ocean of inertia, where the ship drifts helpless in the bland doldrums of amiability and of polite indifference. So with blithe confidence he strode around the corner to beard Great-uncle Shiras in his den.

He mounted the gray stone steps and rang the bell. Henri, the French valet, the only man-servant, answered. Mr. Graham, he said, had already dressed and gone out—to see a lady. But he would be dining at Mr. Levi Graham's at eight o'clock, and Mr. John could catch him there.

"He is not very well," sighed Henri, who had been with Shiras thirty years. "He is not at all a strong man! He is getting old. *Sacré nom!* Why not? Eighty years, and still to run around like a boy! It is his head that is bad. It whirls around. I see him put his hand there and draw it across his forehead, so. He say: 'What is the matter, Henri? I can't think. My brain is all gone!' And by and by maybe he thinks there

is somebody else in the house. He start up and look around very quick—*comme ça*. ‘Are you there, Tinkaire?’ I do not know this man—Tinkaire—or who he was. But my master often speak to him like that, and always so kind! ‘Are you there, Tinkaire?’ It is sad to see him that way!

“Then perhaps next day he feel all right and go to see some lady again. And doubtless he is happy and may say: ‘Well, Henri! To-day I go down to Mr. Pepperill to make my will! And you will be a rich man, Henri! You will never have to work any more. A thousand dollars for every year you have been with me, how is that? You will go back to France and raise the devil, just like me, eh?’ And I thank him, and he lay his hand on my shoulder and say: ‘Henri, it is a terrible thing to live so long like me! When I am gone, go drink yourself to death!’ And he laugh so sad! I feel very sorry for that old man! For the money I do not care. I love him very much, Mr. John. But he is not happy! *Non!* He is not happy!”

Jack descended to the sidewalk, his first enthusiasm somewhat dashed. He had overlooked the obvious truism that you must find your giant before you can kill him. It was still broad daylight when he reached the corner of Thirty-seventh Street. Brophy no longer loitered on the sidewalk, one of John’s first official acts having been to discontinue his services as watchman and shift him down to Wall Street. After all, everybody in the family was grown up, and if a crank wanted to pot him there was nothing to prevent his doing so there or anywhere.

But now he had found a new use for the faithful Brophy. He was to be one of the squad of detectives working secretly for the grand jury under the leadership



of "Honest John" Finnegan, the retired police inspector, whose services had been enlisted by John at the suggestion of District Attorney Hartwell. It had taken quite a little insistence on John's part to persuade Judge McFadden to extend the term, but when he had found that the grand jury were unanimous in being unwilling to make a presentment in regard to conditions in the city, either one way or another, he consented to do so, but without concealing his reluctance. He would, he finally agreed, hold the term open until the first of September on their statement that they desired to prosecute their investigations further. He understood, he informed them, that so far they had found no evidence to justify the aspersions that had been cast on the fair fame of the city, and if by the date named they had unearthed no new facts he would require them so to declare publicly.

This seemed reasonable enough, and the grand jury men accordingly had turned the whole matter over to a committee of three, of which John was made chairman, and had promptly adjourned for two months. Apart from Brophy, John did not even know the identity of the detectives employed by Finnegan, who had taken the position that if the slightest expectation of success was to be entertained, the investigation must be secret in fact as well as name. Once he had received his instructions he would go ahead and see what he could do, but he must be left free to go about it in his own way.

John, who had detected the aroma of pipe smoke as soon as "Bish" had opened the front door, found Finnegan waiting for him in the drawing-room, sitting stiffly in a satin upholstered chair directly under the central chandelier. He had already formed an attachment for the blunt old ex-policeman, and gave him a cordial greeting.



"We're off, Mr. Graham!" said Honest John. "The boys have picked up a lead or two already. That's why I've dropped in to see you. You're paying us and we're under your orders. Do you want us to follow all clues no matter where they take us?"

"Of course I do!" replied John. "If anything of the sort Keating claims is going on in town we want to know it. We're not playing any favorites."

Honest John rubbed the white stubble on his bulldog chin.

"Do you mean that literal, Mr. Graham? You know this business isn't all below Fourteenth Street or east of Third Avenue."

"I don't care where it is. If you see a head, hit it! I'll—we'll—back you to the limit." John clapped him on the back. "What we want is to get at the truth, no matter who it hurts."

"There's a lot of queer things goes on in this town," persisted the ex-inspector. "Suppose it involves somebody you know, Mr. Graham. All I want is for you to give me the tip now before it's too late."

"I don't care who it involves," answered John. "Don't worry yourself about that. The bigger the game you bring down the better."

"All right, then!" answered Finnegan. "If those are the orders—I'll pass the word along. As I understand, we're to give protection to nobody?"

"To nobody," repeated John. "Whether it's the Archbishop, the Governor, the Mayor, or myself!"

## § 2

He had dinner in Toto's room with his mother and sisters, and impatiently lingered there discussing the plans for the summer until after nine o'clock. It would

be futile for him to go around to Levi's too early. He wanted his great-uncles to be in good humor. The later the better.

Mrs. Graham hoped to take Toto, Ditty, and the servants away from the city the following Monday on the *Diana*, which would be attached to the Bar Harbor express. He could see that she was bothered about leaving him behind alone in the house, but it was already wiltingly hot and Toto was pining for the salt air of Frenchman's Bay.

The subject of Rhoda had not again been referred to, but both his mother and himself were conscious of something between them. John was just on the point of going out when Doctor Dominick and Winty Emerson came in, having walked over from the Institute for a breath of air before "putting the bugs to bed," as Winty said.

John knew that Toto was the real object of interest of each of them. He recalled as far back as his college days at Harvard running up-stairs to Winty's room on Holyoke Street one day and noticing on his friend's bureau a photograph framed in birch bark of Toto in khaki. That was seven years ago, when she had been only fifteen and the tutor twenty-seven. Two years later she had become a cripple. Since that time there had been hardly a day when Winty had not been to see her, sometimes coming alone and sometimes, as upon that evening, with Doctor Dominick.

"You must both come up to Frigate Head for a week or two in August," John's mother told them.

"Indeed you must!" declared Toto. "I couldn't get through the summer without my two physicians in ordinary for at least part of the time. Do come!"

"I'm afraid I shall have to stick here!" answered the

elder man. "But Emerson can probably get away. I shall want a personal report on your condition from him."

Toto gave him a grateful look.

"That will be splendid, but you must come too!"

The head of the National Institute shook his head.

"I can't leave town for more than a day or two at a time. All sorts of things keep coming up, you know. But I manage to get a lot of little trips. In the end they mount up to quite a vacation!"

He spoke without regret, with none of that obvious cheerfulness which is so often a bid for sympathy.

Famous as a surgeon as well as a bacteriologist, Erasmus Dominick could have had the world at his feet, could have earned a princely income as the head of his profession. Yet he preferred to remain unknown, secluded like an anchorite at the Institute, where he occupied a small bare room on the top story, and eating, when it occurred to him to eat at all, with the hospital staff in the adjoining building. Money meant nothing to him except as a possible assistance to scientific discovery. But money was only, as he often publicly declared, an incident. Hopkins, Rockefeller, or Graham might build a dozen institutes for scientific or medical research and accomplish less than one whiskered old bacteriologist in a fly-blown little closet in Bordeaux, with nothing but a half-dozen bottles, a test-tube, and a handful of rusty implements.

Less? The tiled floors, the gleaming instruments, the antiseptics, the monkeys and guinea pigs would be there for nothing unless the right whiskered bacteriologist could first be found. Wealth could no more buy genius than it could buy love! Devotion and self-sacrifice are not for sale.

Erasmus Dominick was one in a hundred million. John relied upon, loved, almost worshipped him. Indeed, he would have taken Dominick's judgment on any vital question before that of the board of directors of Graham & Co., even if rendered unanimously. He would have been glad to have him always by his side as an adviser! Yet had he proposed such a thing John knew perfectly well what Dominick would have said—namely, that he had not the time; that the transactions of an international banking business, the directing of a large number of corporations, even if many of them were philanthropic, or the management of an industry involving questions of the greatest delicacy in the relations of capital and labor, was of little importance compared with the work that he was doing. Suppose he could discover the origin of cancer? Isolate the tuberculous bacterium? Or that of meningitis? What did a quarrel about the division of property or the fruits of industry matter when more people were dying each year of preventable disease than had been killed in the Great War?

"How would you like to take a run out to Bitumen with me to-morrow?" John asked him as he got up to go to Levi's.

Before Doctor Dominick could reply Mrs. Graham interposed with:

"I hope you won't go out to the camps, John, particularly just at this time, when there is so much violence. If you have time for that you might help me move to Mount Desert. I find Wallace Garvey quite a loss——"

"But, mother!" protested John, "I must go! That is, if the directors are willing to confer with the men—as I'm sure they will be. In that case there won't be any violence. Anyhow, I've promised to go——"

"Promised?"

"Yes—somebody—who is very much interested in seeing that the men are fairly treated."

She looked quickly at him over her glasses.

"Are you going alone?"

"Why—not if I can help it!" he evaded her. "I've just invited Doctor Dominick, haven't I?"

He was a poor prevaricator. Mrs. Graham turned to their guest.

"If John must go," she said earnestly, "I wish you could arrange to go with him, Doctor. After all, he's pretty young to undertake all these big responsibilities, and your advice would be of great assistance to him."

Doctor Dominick perceived that there was more behind the request than her mere words indicated.

"If you wish it, I will gladly go with him," he replied. "What time do you plan to start?"

"At one—if the board votes as I expect. We meet at eleven. I'll let you know before noon. Good night, everybody!"

John bent over and kissed his mother. She squeezed his hand.

"Wicked old mother! You're a good deal more capable of running that coal company than I am!" he whispered.



## CHAPTER XXI

### MORTMAIN

NO window shone in the house of Levi. No crack of light gleamed beneath the heavy curtains. The shrouded panes reflected the electricity of the Avenue in a dull, repellent glare. Even by day the blue shades were always drawn. Yet as John climbed the brown-stone steps and faced the inhospitably closed outer door, he knew that hidden away somewhere behind its grim façade there was light and warmth in the old house, save only that light and warmth was never permitted to escape outside.

He was admitted by a maid, who told him that the gentlemen were still in the dining-room having their cigars, and that he could go right in. He knew the way well enough. As a little boy he had been afraid to go alone through the long, narrow passage containing Homer's collection of death-masks, which connected the front hall with the extension. Even now the rows of dim, chalky white faces with their closed eyes gave him an uncanny feeling. How colossal some of them were! And how shrunken others after death! Like men's reputations! Outside the dining-room door he paused for a moment with his hand on the knob. He could hear the clink of glass, the loud tones of his Great-uncle Shiras, and Levi's shrill cackle. What was he going to say to them? What excuse was he to give for breaking in on them in this way? Then without answering the question he opened the door and stepped inside.



An electric cluster in the centre of the ceiling threw a garish light upon the table below, at which sat his two great-uncles, old Shiras's crony Bellamy Wing, and his own cousin Homer. The white cloth with its shining glass, the white heads of the old men and their white shirt-fronts were spot-lighted against the mahogany wainscoting, with its wall-paper of imitation Spanish leather, like a Rembrandt. But if the lighting was that of Rembrandt, the composition was that of Hals. At the opposite side of the table Levi was scrunched like a half-closed jack-knife in his great high-backed chair, the skin of his flabby neck hanging in a red dewlap between the spreading points of his high collar. On his right inclined Mr. Bellamy Wing in a deferential attitude, induced in part by a lack of equilibrium. Both were listening to Shiras, who with his hair awry and his collar sprung was pounding on the table with one hand and gesticulating rather wildly with the other.

At the zenith of his peroration he reached suddenly for a small stone jug labelled "Jeroboam," and in doing so caught sight of John.

"Hello!" he bawled. "Where the devil did you come from?"

"Zackly!" echoed Mr. Bellamy Wing. "Where the —*hup*—jew kuffrom?"

Homer, who was sitting with his back to the door, turned and with a sickly smile extended a clammy hand over his shoulder.

"Greetings!" said he; then to Levi: "It's John, father."

"Dear me! So it is!" cackled his great-uncle. "Come in and siddown, Johnny."

John's resolutions faltered. Surely no occasion could be less propitious for presenting his plea for a more con-

ciliatory policy; and yet it would be his only opportunity before the meeting.

"I just dropped over for a minute to have a little chat about the coal business," he said as pleasantly as he could. "How do you do, Mr. Wing? How are you, Uncle Shiras? Howdy, Homer!"

"Better'n could be expected!" declared Shiras, pouring out a couple of fingers from the Jeroboam and shoving it toward his great-nephew. "Have a nip, Johnny? That's the Royal Blend. Your grandfather imported three hundred cases himself straight from Glasgow."

"Straight—*hup*—from Heaven!" amended Mr. Wing, intercepting the Jeroboam and transferring a portion of its remaining contents to himself. "Can't get that sort of stuff now!"

"I suppose not," said John, drawing up a chair. "You know there's a meeting of the Mid-West Coal Company to-morrow."

"Lessus take no thought for the morrow," urged Mr. Wing earnestly. "Le' the morrow take care of things—*hup*—for itself!"

"That's the talk, Wing! Let's forget all 'bout business! 'O little brown jug! Brown jug! Brown jug!" chanted Shiras in his deep bass. "Let's have another little brown jug, Levi!"

"Please, Uncle Shiras! Listen to me for a moment!" begged John. "The coal company——"

"To the devil with the coal company!" exploded his uncle. "I won't talk business, I tell you!"

"Rotten ole business!" said Mr. Wing mournfully.

"I'm netting less than two per cent on my buildings!" asserted Levi from his end of the table. "All the rents go in taxes and repairs. Real estate agents are nothing but crooks nowadays!"

"Where's 'nother Jeroboam?" demanded his brother.

Mr. Wing bent solemnly toward Shiras with an air of imparting information of great moment.

"I'm a ferret for liquor!" he announced with unexpected volubility. "All you got do is put my nose to it and say 'sick 'em'!"

With this he placed the feature referred to upon the tablecloth and, as if following a scent, ran it cautiously toward the Jeroboam. Gazing at the latter fixedly, he continued: "I'm a stag hound! And there's the—*hup*—stag!" He waved at the antlered head blown on the side of the jug. "'The stag—*hup*—at eve had drunk his fill'!"

"I haven't!" announced Shiras. "Not of this pre-war stuff!"

"The war changed everything!" wailed Levi. "There was improvement in the eighties, but everything went back again afterward. I was a fool not to sell out and go into industrials."

"If you had you'd be bellyaching now just the same!" retorted his brother. "With the present labor situation! This foreign scum from southwestern Europe—they're worse than niggers!"

"Niggers!" shrilled Levi. "I can remember during the draft riots in 'sixty-three, when the niggers were dangling from the lamp-posts on Fourth Avenue thick as blackberries!"

John made an involuntary movement of surprise; and Shiras looked at him sharply. Levi's words had evidently acted upon him as a sort of "pick-me-up."

"That's true, Johnny!" he affirmed. "We used to stand in the window and watch the mob chasing the niggers across Washington Square. As Levi says, there wasn't a Fourth Avenue lamp-post that didn't have a dead nigger hanging from it. No joke, I tell you! If it

hadn't been for Colonel O'Brien and the Eleventh New York Volunteers the five thousand rioters might have burned the city. As it was, they made it a hell for three days."

"O'Brien!" Levi's voice cracked with excitement. "It was awful what the crowd did to that man when they caught him away from his troops. The women dragged him by the heels through the streets, mutilated him, and threw his body over his own back yard fence. They were more fiendish than Indian squaws."

"I—*hup*—saw it!" said Mr. Bellamy Wing. "Made me sick!"

"You voted for Seymour!" Shiras shot at him. "He was to blame for it! If we hadn't had a coward in the Governor's chair at Albany the police would have had proper support from the first. If Seymour had asked for troops the riots could have been put down in twenty-four hours. But he was scared to support the draft."

He drew heavily on his cigar.

"Well, I don't much blame him!" piped Levi. "Seymour was a pretty good politician in trying to sidestep the draft. Why, most of New York City was rank Secessionist from the first. I can remember in 'sixty-one—early in the year, I think it was—when Mayor Fernando Wood proposed a resolution in the Common Council that New York should secede from the Union and become a free and independent city under the name of 'Tri-Insular'!"

John was astounded at this generally overlooked tid-bit of history. For the moment he forgot the purpose of his visit. Shiras smashed his fist down among the glasses, so that they jumped.

"The scalawag! He ought to have been taken out and shot!"

"Well, Seymour wasn't the only Copperhead," said Levi. "You know very well that nobody around here was very enthusiastic about the war."

"True! True!" Shiras's face had lost its unnatural flush. Again he addressed his great-nephew.

"Might surprise you to know, Johnny, that the war was damned unpopular here! Even when Lincoln issued his third call for volunteers, there was little response. We were shy, I think, over eighteen thousand on our quota. When the draft was put through in 'sixty-three there wasn't a soldier in the city—the troops were all facing Lee at Gettysburg. The Irish were bitter against the draft, and so were the foreigners. They always are! So are the criminals. Well, they made New York a hell! Before the riots were put down twelve hundred of 'em had been killed."

"You can imagine how unpopular the draft was," commented Levi, "when the Common Council voted two millions and a half out of the city treasury to pay for substitutes for poor men who were drafted and had no money of their own!"

"I paid for mine—*hup*—out of my own money!" declared Mr. Wing, with pride.

"Bah! And you can sit there and boast of it?" roared Shiras.

Mr. Wing shrivelled.

"Tut, tut, Shiras!" quavered Levi. "Bellamy wasn't any different from anybody else. They all did it. You paid for a substitute yourself! I knew his name once—Tucker or Tinkham or some such thing as that!"

Shiras's chin fell forward upon his shirt-front, his features twisted with emotion.

"I don't boast of it!" he muttered. "And, anyhow, I didn't vote for Seymour!"



Even with his collar rampant behind his ear and his black tie stringy, the old man had yet something majestic about him—the majesty of a shattered and ruined temple. John stepped back and opened the door by which he had entered. Silence had fallen upon the other two octogenarians—the one drunk and the other bordering on senility. Homer followed him out and closed the door behind them.

“Old Bellamy’s got his usual bun on!” he said in his graveyard voice as they paused in the dimly lighted passage lined with its silent rows of plaster faces staring up from their cushions of black velvet. “And Shiras is pretty full, too. Although sometimes I’ve heard him even kind of pretend he went to the war, when other people were around who didn’t know any different.”

John hardly heard him. He was disgusted at the spectacle he had just witnessed, shocked at the thought that such senile old men had it within their power to exert a determining influence upon the lives and destinies of others.

They were like rotten trees, still standing but gone at the top. “Dead ones!” He appreciated the term for the first time. As dead as any of those whose ghostly lineaments reposed in the glass cases on either side of him. Kipling’s couplet came to him:

“And because we know we have breath in our mouth and think  
we have thought in our head,  
We shall assume that we are alive, whereas we are really dead.”

They were so old that “the war” meant the Civil War to them. Yet their palsied hands still held the levers that directed the machine of industry. It was cruel—criminal! Yet was it any more cruel or more criminal than if those same levers were held by younger men



whose ideas were equally atrophied—equally archaic? In a flash he realized that he would never succeed in inducing his great-uncles to change their point of view. They were set—like plaster casts.

"I picked up something rather nice last week," Homer was saying in a complaining voice. "A Charlotte Corday—very rare! Found it in a second-hand bookstore! A piece of luck! My Revolutionary set is nearly complete, by the way. I've got Danton, Robespierre, Herbert, Carrier, Marat, Fouquier-Tinville, Princesse de Lamballe, Louis Sixteenth, and Marie Antoinette—at the other end of the case."

John, slowly following his cousin toward the front hall, smiled grimly. His "Revolutionary" set!

"I'm rather proud of my assassins, too!" continued Homer with a touch almost of gaiety. "You may not know it, but this is said to be one of the best collections in the country."

"Indeed! I can easily imagine it!" said John, averting his eyes from a ghastly face of peculiar horror.

"Guiteau—very rare!" replied Homer. "Over there, Wilkes Booth! And in the next case Burke, the Edinburgh garroter—had the devil of a job getting him! Did it finally through Madame Tussaud."

"How—interesting!"

"And there is Napoleon—taken at Saint Helena, you know—and Philippe Égalité!" He was almost animated.

"Splendid! You must be very proud of your collection! Well, I am afraid I must be going. Don't let your father forget to come to the meeting to-morrow, will you? Good night."

The door closed. Once more John stood on the steps, the roar of the traffic in his ears.

## CHAPTER XXII

### STRIKING AT AIR

ALAS for our would-be slayer of giants! Sleep fled his eyes that night; and ten forty-five found him tense in his seat at the end of the table in the board-room. At five minutes to the hour Lathrop, his private secretary, entered, brief-case in hand.

"Good morning," he remarked cheerily. "I'm afraid we're not going to have a quorum. After all, there's not much——"

"No quorum!"

"Why, sir, you see, almost everybody's away," went on Lathrop. "Mr. Pepperill is in Newport, Senator Krass has gone to Nevada, Mr. Kayne is in Europe, and most of the others are on vacations. We need seven and the most we can surely count on is five—unless you can persuade Mr. Shiras and Mr. Levi to come. They don't usually, you know."

"Please call them up and ask them both as a special favor to me—to the company—to get down here as soon as they can."

"Certainly, sir."

The secretary smiled genially and departed, leaving John sick with foreboding. Lathrop returned almost immediately.

"The butler at Mr. Shiras Graham's says that Mr. Graham is still asleep and that he cannot disturb him; and the maid at Mr. Levi's says that he is not at all well this morning. She has had to send for the doctor. Mr. Homer Graham cannot leave his father."

Why had he not thought of this possibility before? It had never occurred to him that his plan could be thwarted by a mere failure on the part of the directors to attend the meeting—yet of course it could be—quite as easily as by active opposition. If he did not get the resolution passed, Rhoda would go to Bitumen without him. If he abandoned his post to go with her, any chance to secure favorable action from the directors would be gone forever and one phase of the industrial battle would be irrevocably lost.

Two or three of the directors had come in by this time, and were standing idly about as if they really did not expect that there would be any meeting. John looked at his watch. It was already sixteen minutes past eleven. The situation was hopeless.

“Well, gentlemen,” he said, “there is no use keeping you any longer. I understand that it will be impossible for us to get a quorum to-day. I shall call another meeting for Friday morning, and I ask particularly that you will make no other engagement that might interfere with it. A matter of great importance to the company, demanding instant attention, has arisen—involving its entire future. Good morning!”

The meeting dissolved.

Never did unhorsed champion, lying prone like a backed beetle, feel a flatter fool! His case with Rhoda was lost. How could he expect her to believe that he had been unable to secure a sufficient number of directors to hold a meeting when a meeting had been called?

Her pale, intense little face, at once sad and accusing, rose before him. He knew that she would not mitigate her sentence. In his eagerness to prove not only his loyalty but his ability to serve her, he had readily accepted the penalty to be imposed in case of failure.

She would be inflexible. She would go to Bitumen with her aides-de-camp! But what then? To seek her now, to drag himself in abasement to her on his knees would accomplish nothing, might even precipitate a scene in which he would prejudice his case beyond repair. She had been ready to dismiss him forever, as it was. By Friday all might be changed.

From the wall the rubicund features of his great-grandfather Mungo looked down at him with a complacent smirk, as if asking what he could expect if he let a woman wind him around her finger. "Don't make a fool of yourself, my boy!" he seemed to say. "Don't flatter yourself that you know how to set the world straight, or that because you have what you call ideals, there are to be no more cakes and ale!" He turned impatiently to the Sargent portrait of Ezra, his grandfather. Out of the green darkness of the blurred background the fiery red-rimmed eyes of the old man seemed to penetrate his own.

"Coward! Weakling! Recreant!" they said. "I builded the city—wilt thou betray it unto the hands of the enemy?"

Then he heard the voice of Rhoda, his beloved:

"You are at the fork in the road, John! You must choose!"

He could see her now as she had stood yesterday, outlined against the sunlight of the lattice, tender yet inflexible, proud yet imploring. He sighed, setting his jaw to keep back the tears of discouragement that forced themselves to his eyes. He dashed them away and caught the white gleam of Carrara.

"Dad! Father!"

The sightless sockets were pointed directly at him! It was as if his father were really there. How strong

and determined were those noble features carved in the pure marble! How honest, how kind, how true his father had been! How steadfast! What a pitiful wab-bler he was in comparison!

Why was he a wab-bler? Was it because he doubted the eternal principles upon which the House of Graham had been reared? Was it not rather because of the light in Rhoda's eyes? Unconsciously John stretched out his arms toward the bust. Something from the beyond flashed through the cold marble to the heart of the wretched boy. A smile seemed to hover upon the white features.

"Courage, Jacko!"

John pillowed his head on his arms.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### BLACKMAIL

THE destinies of men are the sport of circumstances often far less significant than the proverbial quarter of an inch on Cleopatra's nose.

Brophy the ex-watchman had been John's intimate friend ever since the latter had been ten years old. If he did not stand *in loco parentis* he at least ranked in the same category as "Bish," "Nana," "Queen Elizabeth," and "Mary Queen of Scots." Being responsible for the personal safety of the various members of the family, he had come to regard himself as one of it, and it was natural that John, in mentioning the coal strike to his old retainer, should inveigh against the hard-boiled attitude of his two great-uncles.

Now Brophy, while devoted to Thornton and John, thought less than nothing of old Shiras and his brother Levi. As for Homer, he viewed him with a contempt only intelligible when it is realized that Brophy had taken his meals in the house and was familiar with Homer's predilection for "hot water and a little boiled fish."

On the whole, having eaten the Graham bread-and-butter for nearly fifteen years, his social philosophy had taken on a strong tinge of conservatism. But, if Mr. Johnny wanted to meet his men half-way, that two old fossils like Shiras and Levi should thwart his young master's good intentions filled him with a Hibernian indignation as intemperate as his loyalty was impassioned. That his feelings in this respect could possibly affect a situation in a distant State involving the economic future



of an organization numbering over half a million men and one of the greatest industries in the country would, at first glance, seem unlikely. Yet it did.

At about ten o'clock the following morning Mr. Vincent Pepperill, who had returned from Newport the evening before, emerged from his doorway on Washington Square, remarked "*Whew!*" put up a white parasol, and slowly descended the steps.

Knowing full well that a lawyer's clients will not regard him highly unless he so regards himself, Mr. Pepperill had made it a consistent practice through his professional life to insist that his clients should come to him. His only exceptions were pretty women and that well-known connoisseur in pretty women—Mr. Shiras Graham.

The fact was that Mr. Pepperill had received a visit from Brophy, now an active member of Finnegan's secret vice-hunting squad, and that what the latter had confided had filled him with an amusement he had found it rather hard to conceal. He was, it must be confessed, a little puzzled, for he was suspicious by nature and Brophy had sworn by all that was holy that his visit was a voluntary and unaccelerated act on his own part arising out of a profound sense of injustice. Mr. Johnny, he said, knew nothing whatever about it. He had gone further and pledged Mr. Pepperill to an everlasting secrecy in all directions save one. The crucial fact which led the lawyer to give him credence was that he did not ask for money.

Mr. Pepperill picked his way gingerly across Fifth Avenue and arrived half prostrated at Shiras's mansion just as the latter was having his breakfast in the small up-stairs library dedicated to his apocryphal musings over the War of the Rebellion.

He found the old man sitting in a faded wrapper in front of a small table on which stood the remnants of his meal, reading the paper through a double pair of spectacles. He was flushed, disordered, the top of his undershirt showed above the open collar of the dressing-gown, and to Mr. Pepperill he looked, upon the whole, rather disreputable.

"Seen that?" he asked, pointing at the headlines.

Mr. Pepperill had already read the article. It was a lurid account of a pitched battle between strikers and constabulary on the border of Pango County, a few miles south of Bitumen.

"Those strikers are a lot of murderers and assassins!" Shiras declared hoarsely. "I understand there are three thousand more of 'em armed with rifles on the way across the border. Isn't this a devil of a country? And the State's Attorney refuses to ask for Federal aid! I know about that fellow—he's a Bolshevik. He would like to see us forced to recognize the union, and then he'd run for governor on the socialist ticket and win in a walk—he thinks. Sit down. Take this refuse away, Henri."

Mr. Pepperill sank into the low armchair in front of the mantelpiece.

"I suppose you've thought up something about my will?" suggested the old man.

The lawyer shook his head.

"Well, what with this infernal heat it's nearly driven me wild. I don't take any stock in those high-falutin' new-fangled charities, as you know. They're just bottomless receptacles for money. High-priced superintendents, fancy secretaries, giddy nurses—pah! I'd rather leave my money to a museum."

"Why don't you, then?"

Shiras screwed up his nose.

"Fifty millions for art?"

Mr. Pepperill shrugged his shoulders and gave his characteristic little cough.

"Well, part of it, say. How about Homer? Don't you want to leave him anything?"

"No, I don't. A hot-water bottle is all he needs."

"Well—John?"

"Curse that young trouble-maker!" Shiras banged the table with his fist so that it snapped. "He's got too much money as it is! What's biting him, anyhow! Why can't he profit by the experiences of others?"

"H'm!" Mr. Pepperill cleared his throat again. "The fact is that's what I've come to see you about."

Shiras arose and opening the wings of his dressing-gown so that he exhibited a vast expanse of gauze underwear, waved the wings to and fro, "to let in the air," as he said.

"Lord, it's hot! Well, what's the jackanapes up to now?"

He relapsed and took up a palm-leaf fan.

"I don't know that he's up to anything. Of course, one can't be sure. But have you forgotten that he's foreman of a vice-hunting grand jury?"

Shiras suddenly stopped fanning himself.

"One of the detectives has found out about the McCann woman," said Mr. Pepperill shortly.

His host stared at him with furrowed brows.

"But I thought you squared her absolutely."

"We did—gave her twenty thousand and got a release and affidavit from her. But you can't keep a woman quiet. She will talk sometime to somebody. This lady picked one of your nephew's vice-hounds! Anyhow, he's on a lead which, if he follows it far enough, may blow everything wide open."

Shiras kicked over the table with a crash.

"My God! What's to be done?"

"As luck has it, the woman has not asked for any more money as yet—she probably won't unless she's egged on to it—and the officer is willing to keep still himself—for a price."

The old fellow uttered a sigh of relief.

"Well, how much is it this time?"

Mr. Pepperill took a puff from his cigarette without immediately replying.

"Come, come, Pepperill! How much does he want? Will ten thousand fix it? If so, there's my check-book."

"A hundred thousand won't do it."

Shiras ran his fingers through his beard.

"What kind of a game is this?"

"A rather unusual one. The officer is not looking for money, but he demands a price for silence. He agrees to shut the woman up and to say nothing—guarantees immunity, in fact—if——" He paused as if for effect.

"If what?" Shiras's face was convulsed.

"If you'll vote to confer."

"Vote to *confer*!" His voice was one of entire incredulity. "What the devil has that got to do with it?" he added suspiciously. "You're not trying to help that rascally young great-nephew of mine blackmail me, are you, Pepperill?"

"Hardly," answered the lawyer dryly. "He knows nothing about it. No, the proposition simply is this. Somebody else has got the goods on you, or is in a position to get 'em, and so counts on your help in changing the Mid-West Company's labor policy. After all, that's getting off pretty easy, isn't it?"

Shiras was pacing up and down waving the wings of his wrapper.

"The little rascal!" he chuckled. "The little black-mailer! I'd never have expected it of him! Well, he's got me, I'll—I'll—have to come across——"

Suddenly he staggered and reached toward the book-case. His face had become brick-red and his eyes were bloodshot and suffused.

"I can't see!" he choked. "Give me a hand, Pepperill!"

The lawyer led him to the armchair and helped him to sink down into it. Shiras rubbed his hand across his forehead bewilderedly.

"Something's the matter with me!" he groaned. "I'm all gone there! Ever since Brandy Creek——"

## CHAPTER XXIV

### SATAN SURRENDERS

THUS to his amazement, without striking a blow, did our champion win the battle for "humanity in industry." Instead of having the fun of smashing the giant's numskull, Goliath had met him with a polite "Why certainly! By all means! I quite agree with you, my dear young sir!"

No doubt privately Goliath did some heavy cursing before doffing his helmet, but he doffed it and doffed it gallantly. The damn young David had his foot on his Adam's apple, and when the damn young David called to see him and prayed his co-operation, Great-uncle Shiras, to John's intense surprise, agreed to give it. More than that, he guaranteed to deliver Levi and Homer, bound and gagged, "body, boots, and breeches."

John had not had the courage to go to the Pennsylvania Station to bid adieu to Rhoda; but he had both wired and written to her; and his assiduity resulted in the appearance of nine directors at the meeting on Friday morning, among them Randolph McLane. John briefly stated his belief to be that conciliation was the only policy now open to the Mid-West Coal Company, and requested authority to go to the scene of operations, to confer with the men, and to take such steps as then seemed to him wise to adjust their grievances. In a word, he proposed that the company's industrial policies should be left entirely in his hands. There was no debate, unless McLane's sneer qualified as such, and on calling the roll the resolution was found to have been



carried, six to three—John, Shiras, Levi, Homer, Pepperill, and Maitland all voting “yes.” McLane, rubbing his forehead, shouted that they had all gone mad, and moved that the resolution be reconsidered, but John pointed out that he had voted against it and hence could not make the motion. No one else did. The vote stood.

“Have you gone crazy, Shiras?” demanded McLane. “God damn it, man! It will ruin us! Do you suppose anybody will continue to hold stock in the concern? I won’t! It’s capitulation—abject surrender. I’ll resign at once, unless we vote to continue our established policy!”

“Pish-posh, Tex!” retorted Shiras. “Give it a try. The public is against us. The ‘hire-and-fire’ game was all right in our day, but things have changed. Thornton was right when he said the time had come to consider carefully what course we ought to follow——”

“And may I add,” interjected Maitland, “that he told me privately that some such steps as this might have to be taken?”

“You’re mad! Stark, staring mad!” said McLane, picking up his straw hat and starting out.

That day the common stock of the Mid-West Coal Company lost seven points on sales of thirty-nine hundred shares. McLane resigned, as he had threatened. The following day the stock sagged four more points, and the next day eleven.

John had telegraphed the text of the resolution to Warren and Kurtz and ordered them to make no attempt to prevent the holding of meetings or free access through the company’s property. A paraphrase of his telegram he sent to Rhoda, telling her when he expected to reach Graham and asking her to meet him there.

Warren and Kurtz at once wired their resignations, to take effect on John's arrival.

That evening all the New York papers carried a front-page story to the effect that the Mid-West Coal Company, noted for its adamantine stand against unionism, had executed a *volte face* under public pressure and had voted to conduct its business in accordance with the principles enunciated in the Sermon on the Mount. This revolutionary development was stated to be the result of young Graham coming into control of the Graham millions, and the *Mail*, in a commendatory editorial quoted the Gospel according to St. John 1: 6.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness to the Light, that all men through him might believe.

## CHAPTER XXV

### LUCIE

#### § 1

IT was John's intention to start for Bitumen on Saturday afternoon, taking Dominick and Degoutet with him. His mother, Toto, and Ditty had already left the city for Mt. Desert. Thorny was presumably in Cambridge, enjoying the Class Day festivities, after which he would join his mother and sisters at Frigate Head.

John was sitting at his desk after the meeting when Murphy entered.

"Excuse me, sir," said he. "There's a queer old guy down-stairs insists on seeing you. Says his name is Bevin and that he works for you at camp. But he acts sort of crazy, and I didn't want to take any chance——"

John's mind had naturally flashed to Bitumen: he had to recall it.

"Is he a tall old man, a little deaf?"

"Yes—dressed like a lumberman."

"Smooth face—gray hair?"

"That's him!"

"Show him up!" John wondered what could have brought Old Tom down to the city from Holiday Cove. He had not seen him since his father's death; and he stepped to the office door with a hearty welcome upon his lips. But he instantly perceived that social amenities would be out of place. Something had happened. The old guide was laboring under great emotion. He stood there in black cotton shirt, belt, breeches, and boots, twisting his old soft hat and making an unsuccessful effort to speak.

"Why, Tom!" cried John, laying his hand on the old man's shoulder. "What is it? What's the matter?"

The guide waved his head from side to side helplessly.

"It's Lucie!" he answered. "She's gone. Been missing since Thursday."

"Gone!"

"Yes, sir!—run away!"

A terrible premonition came into John's mind. Why had he just been thinking of Thorny?

"How—how do you know—she's—run away?"

"She's been talking of goin' to New York all summer—ever since she knew the family wasn't comin'."

"To New York?" What could the child want with New York? "Haven't you any clue at all? Maybe she's just gone to visit some other girl at Saranac."

"She's—not—at Saranac. She walked to the junction Wednesday night and took the express. She'd saved twenty dollars. She'd mentioned tryin' to get a job with the movies and her mother had handed it to her a little rough, I guess—God, Mr. Johnny! Can't you do something? I'm nigh crazy!"

Tears were trickling down the old man's weather-beaten face.

"My train got in at six this mornin' and I've been walkin' the streets ever since. I didn't want to bother you, Mr. Johnny—with all your troubles! But she's all I've got! She's my one little ewe lamb! It'd kill me if anything happened to her!"

"Do you suspect anybody?"

Old Tom shifted his eyes as he twisted his hat tighter and tighter into a roll.

"I—I don't like to think so!"

"Tell me!" ordered John. "Out with it!"

The guide fumbled in his pocket and withdrew a

crumpled envelope. It was addressed to Lucie in Thorny's hand. The postmark bore a date but a few days before.

"Her mother found that—on the floor under her bunk."

The room blurred for John. Sweat gathered on his forehead. It was incredible that with all his wildness Thorny would do a thing like this! He was irresponsible, reckless—but not bad! Yet how did he know? He and Ranny McLane had flown over to the camp from Cambridge several times that spring.

"Did Lucie get any other letters?" he asked.

Tom shook his head.

"I asked my daughter-in-law that, but she didn't know. You see, Lucie goes fer the mail by herself. We don't know what letters she's been gettin'. Lucie was always a good girl. That is, I always thought she was! Nothin' flighty like there is to so many. But she would go to the movies! She used to get awful excited over 'em—about the women's clothes in particular. Y'see she never had no clothes to speak of."

John paced the room. The possibilities arising out of what might already have occurred were staggering. Apart from the moral aspect of the affair it might involve family disgrace. As an influence the Grahams would be discredited forever. Every cause in which his name was personally enrolled and the success of which he had at heart would suffer. Out in Bitumen the union leaders would encourage the tent colonists and harangue the strikers with appeals to shake off the tyranny of the plutocrats who not only starved the bodies of women and children but satisfied their lust upon them. And he the chairman of a municipal body charged with the investigation and prosecution of such matters!

"Graham planning to rid city of sex crime!" How well he recalled the offensive headline in *The Vortex*. *The Vortex*! How that yellow cur of the press would bark! What would it not say—perhaps justifiably!

A strange sound made John turn quickly. He drew back startled. Could this be the gentle old fellow who had paddled him about the lake—this gaunt avenging Nemesis?

The guide's left hand came down upon John's shoulder with a grip of iron, as he clapped the other upon the handle of the hunting-knife in his belt. It was a solemn dedication to revenge.

"By God!" he cried, "If anything happens to my little girl—I'll cut out his heart!"

## § 2

Ranny McLane, like most boys of his age, was much more concerned with being thought a young devil than with being one. He knew a good many chorus girls in New York and had learned that, however much public opinion might run to the contrary, good looks, and even good legs, were not inconsistent with virtue, nor high spirits, warm hearts, and amiability with innocence. There were as "good sports" in the "Follies" as on the football field. He liked girls who were jolly as well as pretty—and enjoyed giving them a good time; and he was interested in seeing them "get on." The truth was that while he was no saint he was not vicious and did not particularly concern himself with their morals one way or the other.

It is probable that, if analyzed, his ideals might have proved not to differ much from those of Broadway in general—that is to say, that a lady's private life was



her own concern, but that, whatever she made of it, a day on Times Square was worth a cycle of Saranac. His interest in Lucie was altruistic to the extent of his genuinely believing it a shame that she should be allowed to wither on the virgin stem in the heart of the wilderness when she might be a "knockout" featured on every billboard from the Battery to Harlem. For the rest, it must be said for him that he did not think much about it. If she got away with it, naturally she would be grateful. She was just another creature—beautiful, wild, deliciously unsophisticated—who, given half a chance, might have the world—that is, Broadway—at her feet. Joy of living, love of beauty, the freemasonry of youth, drew them together.

With Lucie the natural inhibitions arising out of the relationship of her own family to the Grahams did not come into play so far as this dashing young stranger in his fur-collared leather jacket and aviator's helmet was concerned. Every summer since she could remember she had played, paddled, and climbed with Toto, John, Ditty, and Thorny. They were like brothers and sisters, and her affection for any of them was untinged by sentiment of another kind. Then, like Bellerophon upon a white-winged horse, this curly-haired, debonair, dark-eyed boy had come winging his way to her from out of the sky.

She viewed him as a superior being, treasured his every word, dreamed of him by night, and by day gazed for hours into the blue over the eastward tree tops, hoping that her eyes might catch the flash of sunlight that would herald his coming. Thorny saw, was annoyed, and spoke to Ranny: "You must leave Lucie alone, you know!" But he could not speak to Lucie. Anyhow, the harm was done. She was already enamored. Even

had her childish brain not been dazzled by a vision of herself upon the screen, she would have gone wherever he proposed. For Ranny it was merely another adventure, in which physical attraction was, as usual, confused with sentiment.

It was not hard to arrange. Old Tom was away most of the time, fire-ranging and trail-building, and as the esoteric mystery of motor driving was far beyond her mother's limited comprehension, it fell to Lucie to fetch the mail twice a week from the Junction. Thus she was able to keep in touch with Ranny without any one being the wiser, and he had written that a "producing" friend of his had promised to look her over and, if the photographic tests proved satisfactory, give her a "try-out." His plans, he said, were a little uncertain. She had better arrange to come on short notice.

She, poor child, was all aflutter. Her fairy prince had blown his silver horn and was beckoning her to him! She cached Ranny's letter in the rocks of the pine grove and, unobserved by her mother, made her limited preparations.

One afternoon Lucie, taking her basket, ran the flivver down to the Junction for the mail. Old Mr. Billings, who kept the grocery store, pulled two letters out of the "B" box, examined them carefully, and handed them to her with, "Well, Lucie! Gettin' to be quite a letter writer, ain't ye?"

"Cambridge"—"New York!" She was too excited to reply. While the old fellow potted around filling the basket with the few necessities on her list, the girl slipped out of the store, crossed to the shadow of the scale house and hastily opened the letter postmarked "New York." Ranny wished her to come to the City on Thursday—that was to-morrow! Could she—as soon

as that? She told herself that she must! The other letter was merely a friendly little note from Thorny, such as he wrote her once or twice every year, telling her how they all were and how he was going to miss Holiday Cove.

She crushed both letters into her pocket, returned to the grocery store for her basket, and drove back to the camp. Her grandfather had gone up on the mountain to build an observation tower and would not return until the next evening. When they were alone the two women went to bed at sunset. All that would be necessary was for Lucie to kiss her mother good-night as usual, put on her "store" clothes, extinguish her candle, wait until the customary sounds issuing from the next cabin indicated safety, and make her escape.

Simple as it was in fact, in contemplation it seemed a hazardous adventure. She purposed walking to the Junction, but even so she knew that once clear of the camp she would be safe, since her mother could not drive the machine. She had filled a lantern with kerosene and hidden it and thrust a handful of toilet articles into her little imitation alligator-skin bag. It was just such a night, save that it was warmer, as the one upon which Thornton Graham and John had made their last trip together from the camp to the city.

Half a mile from the cove Lucie lighted the lantern, for although the stars had thus far enabled her to follow the track without difficulty, her boots were too tight and she stumbled upon the ties. She had no watch, but she had allowed plenty of time for her twelve-mile walk and had to wait in concealment nearly half an hour before she heard the rushing roar of the train echoing through the night. Then, for the first time, her courage faltered. She had never been on a sleeping-car and did not even

know what they were like inside. She had no ticket, and she feared they might not allow her to board the train. Besides, if Mike, the switchman, saw her, he would certainly order her home.

She lurked in the shadow of the scale house until the headlight of the express glinted around the curve and the train thundered alongside the platform. The stop was always a perfunctory one at best, and sometimes the engineer did not even actually allow the train to come to a standstill. This, in the present instance, facilitated Lucie's purpose, for while the conductor was naturally taken aback at the sight of a young girl waiting in the middle of the night upon a wayside platform in the heart of the woods, there was no time to ask questions, and he and the porter lifted her to the steps and swung her aboard the still moving train. Half a minute later it was boring through the night again at fifty miles an hour, and the conductor, father of five very young ladies himself, was punching her rebate check and studying her face over his glasses.

"Got anybody to meet you when you get to New York?" he asked benignly, as he made change.

"Oh, yes!" answered Lucie. "Yes, indeed! I have a friend who's going to meet me!"

"Well—you can take lower seven," said Mr. Cutler, resolving to watch out for said friend, for the child was, he declared, the prettiest thing he had ever laid eyes on.

Lucie lay down without attempting to undress and was up again at the first streak of daylight. She was deliciously surprised and relieved. The conductor and the porter had not been horrid to her. The train had not been wrecked. Nobody had catechized her or accused her of being a wicked girl. The sleeper was warmer and ever so much more comfortable than the shack she

lived in at Holiday Cove or even the cottage at Saranac. The gentle swaying of the car, the subdued rumble of the wheels, the elegance of her surroundings and the flickering flight of the midsummer countryside at sunrise filled her with a drowsy ecstasy. She felt for the first time the excitement of her new freedom. She had thrown off the shell of her past and emerged into a glorious and wonderful world.

The occupants of the other sections were getting up. The aisle was full of men in dishabille, and bulging curtains. They flashed by a botanical garden with lakes and gravelled roads, paused to change engines, somebody said—then crossed a bridge over a blue canal.

“Hundred and Twenty-Fifth Street!”

The conductor was by her side.

“Are you getting off here or are you going through to the Grand Central?” he asked.

She did not understand and it flashed over her that there might be some dreadful mistake.

“You stay right on,” he directed, as she hesitated, “until I tell you to get off!”

They entered a tunnel, emerged to a dim region of pillars, arches, and open spaces flooded with dusty sunlight and ground to a stop alongside a concrete platform. The conductor was with her again. He looked at her in a paternal manner, then beckoned to a porter and whispered to him. The negro nodded, took Lucie's little bag and cape and started along with the crowd. She followed, overwhelmed at the size of the station and the magnificence of her surroundings. She was in a vast hall containing multitudes of people. Her feet trod upon whispering marble. She forgot all about the porter until she saw him speaking to a lady in a gray dress standing by one of the exits.



"Is some one meeting you, my dear?" asked this lady, smiling through her gold-rimmed spectacles.

"Oh, yes!" beamed Lucie, hastily looking along the line of expectant faces beyond the barrier.

"Would you mind telling me—" began the agent of the Travelers' Aid Society, when some one ducked beneath the rope and Ranny seized her.

"Hello!" he cried. "How was the trip?"

"Oh, Ranny!" She kissed him. "It was fine! Great!"

The woman in gray was watching.

"Is this young lady related to you?" she inquired suddenly.

"Is she *related*?" he repeated gayly. "She's *my wife*!"

Lucie nearly swooned for joy. Next instant her rhapsody was stifled.

"I had to tell the meddling old fool that!" he muttered. "It's the only thing would shut her up!"

He gave the porter a half-dollar and relieved him of the bag and cape.

"First we'll go over to the Biltmore for breakfast and then we'll hustle right up to the studio. My friend Jack Reynolds—he's one of the really big fellows, you know—will be there with his camera man at half-past nine, and we can see the stills and a projection of the strip to-morrow night. Say, Lucie, you're in luck!"

She looked at him both sad and happy. That he should have made such a misstatement about their relationship without apparently giving it another thought seemed strange and callous. But he could not have been cruel intentionally! He was far too kind for that! How wonderful he was in his pearl-gray baggy golf suit!

"Oh, Ranny!" she murmured.

A very fine gentleman, standing smilingly at the door—



way of a great room full of little tables all covered with gleaming china and silverware, bowed low before them, and another smiling gentleman, rubbing his hands, waved them to seats by an open window. She was thrilled—half afraid to touch the beautiful things. Ranny, she decided, must be a very important person. Many a glance was directed toward the pair as they sat talking so eagerly to one another, both so tanned, so good-looking, so delighted to be together.

"I had to find somewhere for you to go to-night," he said. "You know they act something fierce at the big hotels about taking in women without baggage—or even with it, for that matter. So I took a room for you around at a dump I know in Forty-fifth Street, the Elysium. It isn't very swell, but I know 'em all there and they'll make it easy for you."

"I'm sure it'll be fine, Ranny!" she said trustfully.

It was all fairy-land after that—a succession of astounding and rapturous experiences. The magnitude of the buildings, the noise, the immense number of people overwhelmed her. The film pictures thrown on the screen in the little movie theatre at Saranac had taught her something of what to expect, yet they had been but silent ghosts of the reality. Fifth Avenue was a panorama, the Park a paradise, and the studio to which he took her an enchanted garden peopled by jinns and houris, where fountains played, cascades tumbled, palm trees waved in artificial breezes, where mosques and minarets, coral reefs and castles, churches and Chinatown were all mixed up together, where cow-punchers and dervishes, South Sea islanders, "bella donnas," doughboys, and funny old ladies sat smoking cigarettes or munching frankfurters in a single happy family.

A young woman whose face looked as if it had floated

off a magazine cover called her "honey" and "dearie" and "sweetheart" while swiftly covering her face with cold cream and a thick coat of powder and deftly completing her make-up with carbon pencil and lip stick. Then she was led, self-conscious and simpering, past loitering stage hands and electricians, into a weird world where one stepped off a cottage piazza, covered with crimson ramblers, into a mediæval banquet hall hung with armor, where overhead as in dim sea depths swam squid-like monsters with round glassy bodies and long looped tentacles, that flared and hissed at her.

"Try not to squint!" said a man's voice. "All right, Al. Let's have the lights!"

A dazzling shaft of yellow banged her between the eyes—from the side, another.

"That's good! Shoot! That's enough!"

The light was suddenly shut off with a click.

"All right, miss!"

"Is that all?" She wanted more.

"Yes. Come along, kid!"

Her *décolleté* friend had her round the waist and was leading her back through the narrow thoroughfares of Bagdad and Ispahan to the boudoir of the Pompadour.

"You looked grand!" she assured her as she rubbed Lucie's patient cheeks. "You'll film fine! Say! Norma Talmadge was in this morning! See her?"

## CHAPTER XXVI

### ROUGH STUFF

#### § 1

THEY were really very kind to her. She had never been so petted in all her life, and she hung around all day perfectly satisfied, happy if a scene shifter winked at her. Holiday Cove seemed as distant as if on another planet. At noon her new friend took her to a cafeteria, where she ate two "Napoleons" and four chocolate éclairs, and afterward—for Ranny had gone to a baseball game—she watched them shoot "The Devil's Doll"—a gripping story of New York Life where all the ladies took drugs and where the blond heroine was pursued even into a Fifth Avenue ballroom by a tong Chinaman with an automatic in his flowing sleeve.

The fact was that now that he had got her to New York, Ranny did not know exactly what to do with her. It had seemed all right enough in the early morning excitement, but he was a little uneasy about being seen around with her at the restaurants; she was too young and too confoundedly pretty and her dark blue serge costume too obviously ready-made. He compromised by taking her to a "rôtisserie" on upper Broadway and then to a vaudeville show where a couple of girls in sunbonnets and gingham dresses did a "Pigs in Clover" turn with a barnyard accompaniment in which the "trap" imitated in turn all the domestic animals. Lucie's delighted laughter could be heard all over the theatre and the house laughed both with and at her. The asbestos rattled down and Lucie reluctantly fol-

lowed Ranny out. It was already nearly half-past eleven o'clock.

"Now we'll go to dad's fancy dress shindig," said he. "He gives one every Thursday night when he's in town. It's great fun and you see all the top-liners."

"But I can't go dressed like this!" she protested, yet hungry for a glimpse of this new heaven.

"That's easy," he assured her. "We'll get something at Eversham's. He's always open until midnight."

They stopped at a costume and wig maker's just off Columbus Circle and were outfitted in no time, Lucie charming in a Pierrot costume of white and black with a small cap which brought out all the piquancy of her hybrid blood.

"You're a darling!" cried Ranny when once more they were in the taxi, and she let her head fall on his shoulder and stay there until they drew up outside the tall dark building on the roof of which Randolph McLane had his apartment.

The arcade on the ground floor, through which the elevators were reached, was silent and empty. No one would have suspected from its aspect that anything lively was going on above. Lucie began for the first time to feel a little tired, but presently the elevator appeared and she forgot her weariness as they shot up—up—higher than she had ever been in her life—growing dizzy counting the floors as they slipped by—twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty—— Then the elevator stopped abruptly and the attendant threw open the door.

This fairy-land was a real one. She was standing in a rose arbor at the end of a great terrace open to the sky and looking directly down upon Central Park and the flashing lights of Broadway. Overhead rollicked a great round moon, laughing down on hundreds of costumed

couples who dipped and glided to the boom and bray of the jazz.

"Isn't it won-derful!" she gasped, enraptured, pressing her hands to her breast.

"A little bit of all right!" agreed Ranny.

Beyond, a skeleton roof used only in wet weather had been decorated with flowers and transformed into a refreshment room. Two signs pointed that way, reading: "To Canada!" and "The Twelve-Mile Limit." Now as the sheiks and ballet girls, the Indian princesses and Benedictines, the nautch girls and sailors, the crusaders and nuns, neared it, they broke away from their embraces and crowded about the table where a Hindoo was serving out champagne. Then they would go on again, either with the same partner or with another, it did not seem to matter which; for if a man found himself abandoned he seized the next woman whom he encountered without a companion and whirled her off with him. Sharp perfumes stabbed the nostrils, clinquant finery flashed and glittered in a tinsel maelstrom, shrill laughter, faint screams of protest, metal words clattering upon the roof of bedlam, rose above the confused uproar of the dance.

A smiling colored girl showed Lucie into a small dressing-room and helped her into her costume. When she came out again Ranny was waiting for her—her twin. What a dear boy, what a charming young prince, he was!

"Come on now and meet dad!" said he and, taking her arm, led her to a carpeted corner where McLane was sitting with some men in evening dress. He greeted Lucie cordially and expressed the hope that she would enjoy herself, but there was something about him she instinctively disliked—a note of patronage which she felt but did not recognize beneath the punctiliousness of



his manner. Why were he and his friends not in costume, too? She asked Ranny.

"Oh, that bunch wouldn't take the trouble to dress up!" he replied shortly. "They're much too hot stuff! Why, that fat fellow with the double chin and pink eyes owns seventeen theatres! Come on, let's have a turn or two."

"I don't know how!" she protested with delicious perturbation.

"Bunk!" he answered, grabbing her.

She abandoned herself to him and found herself dancing without an effort. A Zulu in a lion skin and carrying a great spear, which he managed dexterously, caught sight of her and showed his teeth in a fierce grin; and a young man dressed like a jockey and somewhat the worse for liquor insisted on trailing them halfway across the room. More people—a flock of girls straight from the "Follies"—came pouring out of the elevator, and the uproar grew ever louder. They reached "Canada" and Ranny offered her champagne, but did not press it upon her, although he drank several glasses himself.

She noticed that behind the flower-decorated ironwork at the end of the terrace a number of couples were having private parties of their own—several of them standing motionless in each other's arms. They stopped a second time in the crush before the refreshment booth and a devil with a forked tail and horns passed a quart bottle of whiskey out over the heads of the crowd to Ranny, who was instantly assaulted by a dozen thirsty ladies with glasses in their hands. In the ensuing confusion Lucie was thrust outside the circle and for a moment found herself alone. The young man dressed like a jockey sighted her and to her embarrassment tacked toward her.



"Whoa there, filly!" he hiccupped. "I'll back you—hundred to one! What do you say to a canter?"

She dodged behind the crowd to avoid him, and to her relief encountered Ranny again. He was talking excitedly to a girl Lucie had not seen before, and who looked as though she had forgotten to finish dressing.

"No, Lolita, I can't, I tell you!" she heard him say. "I've got my hands full to-morrow!"

Flushed, his voice unnaturally loud, he looked straight at Lucie yet did not seem to see her.

The girl, whoever she was, leaned toward him and whispered something in his ear. He shook his head.

"No, I can't!" he repeated regretfully. "I'm sorry—" The girl's face was within an inch or two of his own, and he bent quickly and kissed her upon the mouth.

To Lucie it was as if she had been struck in the face. Who was this half naked creature with whom Ranny was on such terms of intimacy that he must appease her importunities with a public caress? He must be in love with her! Lucie shrank back, shocked, wounded, and bewildered, into the crowd. Ranny had deliberately deceived her. Had he not kissed her openly in the station—upon the lips? Even if he had been fibbing about her being his wife, she knew from what she had seen in the movies that a man did not kiss a girl on the lips unless he meant to marry her. He could not intend to marry both of them! Could he have been deceiving her all along—about everything? Was it all—including the morning at the studio—a trick to get her to the city and do something terrible to her? Fear wrapped her in a clammy sheet. She felt an alien in a heartless, indifferent world. The faces about her in the whirling throng suddenly seemed to her hard, sodden, sensual.

That very look of timidity made her all the more alluring to the elder McLane, who at the instant approached, looking for a glass of champagne. Where did Ranny find them?

"Lonesome, my dear?" he asked, putting his arm about her. "Then come right along with Daddy."

He felt her tremble. So she was new at the game!

"Where did Ranny get you? He has so many girls! I don't know why you all fall for that young devil."

"Let go of me!"

She was pushing him violently away from her, disgust and disillusion on her face. He let her go.

"Am I as bad as all that?" he inquired more gently. "I didn't mean to offend you."

She was puzzled. Perhaps she had been unjust—rude—to him. Anyhow, here was an opportunity to find out how things stood.

"All right," she said. "I will excuse you. Please tell me, is Ranny engaged to be married to anybody?"

The elder McLane burst out laughing.

"Why do you want to know? Want to vamp him? Take a tip and don't try! He's a wild bird."

He stepped nearer and peered down into her face.

"What's your game, kid?"

Poor Lucie hung her head.

"Look here!" he said, leading her into the shadow of a pillar. "Listen to me. I don't know who you are from Adam—or Eve, I suppose I should say; but the fact that Ranny brought you—— What I'm driving at is, you'd find me a heap better friend. We old fellows who know the world are a damned sight more considerate." He had been speaking rapidly in a detached tone. Unexpectedly he turned to her and said passionately: "Honestly—child. I think—you're—*wonderful!*"

Into his eyes came a look that she had never before seen in those of any one, and it terrified her.

"What do you say, darling? Shall we be friends?"

This time he seized and squeezed her boldly. She wrenched herself free and ran toward the exit, her cheeks aflame, tears blurring the lights. McLane looked after her ironically, shrugged, and walked back to his corner.

Lucie hurried to the dressing-room, where she tore off her costume, handed it to the astonished maid, and seizing her hat rang for the elevator. She was still too bewildered and hurt to know what she was going to do. Her only thought was to get away from that terrible place and those loathsome people. The elevator man eyed her cynically. He had seen a lot of rough stuff in his day, but he had little sympathy with girls who deliberately put themselves in the way of it.

Almost frantic with shame and fright, Lucie could hardly wait for him to open the elevator door, and when he did so, bolted out into the arcade at top speed.

"Lucie!" The voice was a familiar one, and she stopped and looked back. Thorny stood by the open door of the elevator gazing after her in astonishment.

"Lucie! What on earth—— Where have you been?"

She shrank against the wall and he hurried to her.

"Lucie, dear! What's the matter?"

"Oh, Thorny!" she sobbed.

He put his arms around her. "It's all right, Lucie!" he said. "I'll look after you!"

They walked slowly along Broadway with the midnight crowd while she gave him an account of her trip to the city. She was deadly tired, for she had had no real sleep for over thirty-six hours and had been constantly upon her feet since the preceding evening.

"If I'd known you were coming to New York I could

have picked you up and brought you along in my motor!" he commented. "I've just run down from Cambridge."

She handed him the slip of paper bearing the address of the Elysium and they walked to it. It was a shabby place, frequented by fly-by-night theatrical troupes and "ladies not living with their husbands," where the counter was nothing but a cigar case and where the plaster of the lobby walls was only partially concealed by fragments of marble veneer. A criminal-looking clerk was smoking in a cubicle behind the house telephone, reading a pink paper, and upon learning the number of her room he glanced casually at the register and picking up her valise led the way toward the elevator.

"What sort of a room have you got?" asked Thorny.

"I don't know. I haven't seen it."

"Then I'll come up and look at it. We've got to make you comfortable, you know!"

The elevator ground up five flights before depositing them in a smelly hall, and the clerk, who was acting in a dual capacity, immediately descended again to his post in the lobby.

The room was one of those disconsolate hotel bed-chambers with stained and dusty furniture and dirty lace window curtains which have harbored so many unrecorded tragedies, and Thorny threw open the window with an ejaculation of disgust. It was after one o'clock on Friday morning, but the darkness still rumbled and shook and the streets clamored with pedestrians and taxis.

They pulled a couple of chairs into the draft and sat down while Thorny lighted a cigarette and began to question Lucie about the details of her adventures, particularly concerning those at the McLane roof party, to

which he had been going when he had encountered her in the arcade.

She was already half asleep when he arose to go, and he was in the act of bidding her good night when there was a sharp rap on the door. Thorny opened it. The clerk stood outside; and behind him another man.

"I'm sorry to disturb you," said the clerk. "But is your name Brown?"

"Certainly not," answered Thorny. "Why?"

"This room was engaged yesterday in the name of Mr. and Mrs. John Brown. Are you this young lady's husband?"

Thorny was getting angry.

"Of course not!" he retorted. "She's merely a friend of mine. I was just going away when you knocked."

"Well, you'll both have to get out!" growled the clerk. "Didn't you come here with her this morning when she left her bag and got her room key?"

"I did not!"

"Well, if you're not Mr. and Mrs. Brown——"

"This lady is Miss Lucie Bevin of Saranac Lake!" replied Thorny, furious. "And my name is Thornton Graham. I live at forty-seven Park Avenue. If you don't want Miss Bevin here, the sooner I can find another place for her to go to the better. Come along, dear."

The valise had not been opened; Lucie again put on her hat and they once more descended to the street.

## § 2

The envelope in Thorny's handwriting that Tom Bevin had shown him had left no doubt in John's mind as to his younger brother's connection with Lucie's



disappearance. He did not, however, jump in consequence to the conclusion that any harm had come to her. Indeed, he could imagine a worse fate for either of them than that they should marry. Did not the sons of millionaires have a way of marrying young ladies regarded as their social inferiors but often quite the reverse? But no time must be lost in ascertaining their whereabouts. How? He could of course appeal for aid to Finnegan and Brophy, who would gladly give it; but that he should put a squad of official vice-hunters upon the scent of his own brother, particularly if in the event of success they must become deaf, dumb, and blind, was inconceivable.

A great "story" that would make for the papers if it ever "broke"! "Graham's own sleuths catch younger brother!" If only he were not so conspicuous a figure! If only old Tom were not in his slouch hat and laced boots! Somebody ought to comb every hotel and boarding-house in the city, but in such a way that no suspicion would be aroused. A scandal would be infinitely worse than a marriage. But all that would take days perhaps; and "time was of the essence."

Casting about desperately he thought of Hartwell, got him upon the telephone, and in less than five minutes, with old Tom safely concealed from public gaze inside a closed taxicab, was on his way to the Criminal Courts Building. His own presence there would excite no comment in view of his official connection with the Grand Jury, and Tom could remain in the taxi while the conference was on.

The District Attorney greeted him warmly, but when John confided to him his errand Hartwell made no attempt to conceal his concern.

"By George!" he exclaimed. "Of course the question



is how to keep it out of the papers while at the same time doing everything possible—— You can hardly ‘sick’ Finnegan on the case! What a ‘story’ that would make for somebody—our friend Gideon, for instance! The private detective agencies are useless. The police are the only ones who could really help and you simply can’t—no, you simply couldn’t!—give them the facts. It would be taking entirely too much of a chance! You say the girl is beautiful.”

“Very.”

Hartwell pondered.

“Of course we can cover the morgue and the hospitals through the Bureau of Missing Persons at Police Headquarters—all the public institutions. But she isn’t in a public institution. What you need is a public alarm both for her and for him.”

“Exactly!” answered John, mopping his forehead. “And a public alarm would mean the disgrace of my family. Do you know, Hartwell, not until to-day did I ever realize the significance of that verse in the Bible that says a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches.”

“You have both!”

“I have at this moment, but who knows——!”

He got up and commenced walking about.

“There’s another danger,” said the District Attorney. “This old grandfather, if left to himself, may and very probably will get talking. These old people are usually garrulous. Some reporter might spot him for a picturesque character, give him a shot of hootch, and get a front-page story out of him. You’ve got to ‘can’ him somehow. If necessary get him drunk yourself and lock him up in the cellar. No, we’re rather up against it. But in a sense no news is good news; for any news

would be bad news. The girl may have gone to some of the film studios. I'll put a trustworthy man on that. We may get something that way, but it seems to me the most likely bet is on your brother. There must be a lot of places where he hangs out—usually. Have you tried the Harvard Club?"

"No," said John, "I haven't tried anything yet. I came right to you."

"Where does he get his theatre tickets?"

"Manson's."

"Well, that's worth a shot. Where does he eat?"

"I don't know."

"Has he got any intimate friends?"

"Yes!" replied John. "He has one very intimate friend."

"Who?"

"Randolph McLane, Jr."

"Well, you ought to run him down at once!" He glanced suddenly at John. "By the way, where does your brother sleep?"

"At home—when he's in New York."

"Have you looked for him there?" asked Hartwell.

"He's not there. I slept there myself last night. There's only a caretaker in the house."

"How do you know he didn't sleep there?"

"Because I do know. His room is right below mine. I'd have seen him. And I'd have seen his things—his bag—his hat in the hall. The caretaker would have spoken of his being there."

"Did you see her before you went out this morning?"

John thought.

"No," he said finally, "I didn't. But you may be sure that my brother did not sleep at Forty-seven last night."

Hartwell picked up his desk telephone.

"What's your number?"

"Murray Hill 9081."

"Name of caretaker?"

"Brady."

In a moment he had secured the connection.

"Hello!" he said in a casual tone. "Is Mr. Thornton Graham there? Speaking? Hold on a minute!" He handed the instrument to John with a grin— "There he is!"

The gay tones of Thorny's voice over the wire sounded in John's ears sweeter than the far-famed bells of Shandon. Still weak from the shock his nervous system had received, the relief at finding his brother safe at home and that all was well unnerved him for the moment. Lucie and he had both slept at Forty-seven, the boy said. Mrs. Brady had fixed them up in great shape and had even got their breakfast for them. Lucie was fine; at that particular moment up in the Harlem studios. They were going to see the "stills" that evening. He would wait for John at the house and they could have luncheon together somewhere.

Hartwell patted John on the back.

"Take my advice, old man, and ship this piece of flaming pulchritude back to Saranac on the first train," said he. "And don't let the old boy, her granddad, far out of your sight either. Congratulations! You're lucky this particular vice-hunt ended where it did!"

Old Tom insisted, however, on going at once to Lucie; and, acting on Hartwell's hint, John for precautionary reasons decided to accompany him, stopping en route for Thorny, who explained that Mrs. Brady had let them in at the area door the night before, thus accounting for John's failure to notice any of their paraphernalia

in the front hall, and that they had both slept until long after he had left the house for Wall Street in the morning.

They found Lucie in the studio, listening with a group of female "extras" to the great Mr. Byron Robbins, a rosy-faced little Santa Claus of a man in shell-rimmed spectacles, who paced nervously up and down a narrow strip of neutral territory between a cocoanut island and a snow-bound Siberian village.

"Remember now," he implored them, "that you're going to be eaten by wolves! Get that? *Eaten by wolves!* Horrible!"

Lucie, looking even lovelier than when John had last seen her, threw herself into her grandfather's arms, with incoherent protests of remorse. John could see that she was half-hysterical with excitement. The old man said nothing but held her tight for several seconds vainly striving to control his emotion.

"Now don't forget you're going to be eaten by wolves!" again adjured the director. Then catching sight of Tom he added: "Hello, you! I've been looking everywhere for a 'coonskin-cap man.' Do you mind stepping over to the No. 5 studio?"

Old Tom gaped at him.

"Say, mister, I ain't no play actor," he protested.

"I'm not looking for an actor," retorted Mr. Robbins. "I'm looking for a feller who can wear a fur cap and carry a gun—for ten dollars a day. You see that wigwam over there? Well, you're a scout, see?—go in behind that and ask for Mr. Runny—he'll tell you what to do." He turned genially to John as Lucie led her grandfather away. "You're friends of Miss Bevin's? She has screen quality—naturalness—beauty—lovely figure—photographs to perfection. Of course I'll have to try her first in small parts, but if she has any intelligence and

can act the least little bit she ought to be a knockout. The trouble is that most of these girls are morons. I don't think she is. I've signed her up at a hundred dollars a week for six months, but that of course is only a beginning."

Mr. Robbins nodded and walked briskly away.

"Now!" he called, clapping his hands. "Are you all ready to shoot that dying mother? Where's Miss Cumnock? That woman's never on time! She thinks because she's featured—!" He vanished amid the properties lamenting the dilatory nature of Miss Cumnock.

Thorny was enraptured.

"Gee!" he burst out. "I just wish I could wear a coonskin cap up here for ten dollars a day—or ten cents! I'd do it for nothing—I'd pay to do it! I say, John, wouldn't it be fun to buy an interest in a moving-picture concern?"

Tom and Lucie reappeared picking their way amid the *membra disjecta* of a Moorish castle.

"Grandfather's got a steady job at fifty-five a week!" she exclaimed beaming. Thorny poked the old guide in the ribs through his ragged shooting coat.

"I say, Tom, let me in on this will you? 'The Bevin Pictures, Incorporated.' Super-specials only! It won't be more than a year or two before the Bevins will be able to buy out the Grahams and make the Rockefellers and all the rest of them look like thirty cents!"

Mr. Robbins, who had given up all hope of Miss Cumnock, rejoined them.

"I've a good mind to substitute Bevin for her!" he growled, pulling Lucie around in front of them and laying his palm along her cheek.

"Isn't she a beautiful child? Wonderful bone structure! Marvellous for half-tones—the *nuances*—you get

me? Look at those contours!" He put his finger under her chin and tilted back her head. "Did you ever see anything finer than that nose? Marion Davies better look out! Straight as a ruler. Look at the curve of that nostril! Give me that kid for a year or two and I'll make a Barbara La Marr of her!"



## CHAPTER XXVII

### AN OLD MAN'S FANCY

SHIRAS had worried and fidgeted all through the spring about his will. Confound the money! The truth was he had nothing else to think about and the heat had got into his old head. Already everybody he knew had gone away except Pepperill, and even he disappeared every Thursday afternoon until the following Monday.

The fools! Why did they want to make themselves uncomfortable at some rickety hotel instead of staying quietly at home in New York, "the finest summer resort in the world"? Levi, for example! What was the use of his going up to Mizzentop and rocking in a chair on a piazza with a row of old women for three months? Bosh!

All the same, Shiras was desperately lonely. At first, try as hard as he could to occupy himself, the days were never-ending. He tossed in bed until after ten, dawdled about the house behind the shade of the Venetian blinds until half-past four, and then with Henri at his side motored up to Longvue or City Island and then back for a solitary dinner in the great bare dining-room of the Corner Store Club.

He would gladly have gone away himself, but he had nowhere to go. All his contemporaries had died, and his manners had never been sufficiently conciliatory to attract the younger men. He would have liked to join them in a roaring game of poker; he consoled himself with the thought that they were probably "pikers."

Jean had invited him up to Schooner Head for a fort-

night, but he hated train travel, so that it did not seem worth his while. Of course, he could have motored, but his car was a limousine—of the small city type—and the vibration of fast travel made his head hum. Three long days each way! Fool business! He would have no sooner got there than he would have to come away again. New York was good enough for him! New York was all he had—that is, all except Cecily Coutant.

There she was—all alone—right at his back door! There was something about the way her bosom lifted under her smock that stirred his old blood. She piqued him, too. A saucy jade, with a warm streak of tenderness. Irish somewhere, he guessed. He had made a lifelong study of women and she put him on his mettle.

She liked the old man, and had a fully developed bump of curiosity. Besides, he knew how to spend money on a girl, and she speedily supplanted Henri as an occupant of the back seat of the limousine on the afternoon excursion. Their relations were punctiliously decorous, the old beau adopting a brusque, jocosely manner toward her which opened wide the door to intimacy, but which only accentuated the deference and delicate consideration of his actual conduct. The affair took on a vicarious excitement through the recollections it aroused. At times she stirred the strings of memory's lyre poignantly. He went back over the years and concluded it was that Austrian girl at Ischel in 'sixty-eight. Well, he had had his day even if he was an old dog now!

Every afternoon at five o'clock the little limousine would pull around the corner into University Place and Cecily would join him on an excursion up the Hudson or to the beaches. He always found her alluring, often uncomfortably so. Her repose made her doubly attractive. Yet he could sense the throb of her pulse under

her brown skin. The whole experience stimulated him surprisingly. Once he offered rather obviously to wait on the beach at Coney while she took a swim, but she only laughed.

For the first time he felt the irony of his age. Feeling as young as ever, he began to wonder if physical decay were a necessity. Much of the charm of his youthful days came back to him. He had been a great "boulevardier" in his time—a crony of Ward McAllister and his group. No one could plan a better dinner or choose a finer wine in those days than he.

He entered upon a period of recrudescence in which he invoked for the girl's pleasure all his ancient skill as an entertainer. There were dinners *à deux* at Long Beach and on the Merrick Road, suppers at Arrowhead and Pelham—*déjeuners* at Pierre's and the Ambassador. He did his best, spending lavishly and asking nothing in return except the pride of having this stalwart young beauty with him. What he pretended to himself—and others—is not for us to speculate upon. He even, when bothering over his will-making, contemplated leaving her ten thousand or so. Why did he have to die?

In the midst of this second blooming he happened upon a novel in the library of the Corner Store, the plot of which turned on the possibility of rejuvenation. In it an apocryphal elderly lady became by means of some glandular hocus-pocus a slender virgin, susceptible anew to all the emotions of youth. The idea—not the novel, he despised fiction—fascinated him. Why not?

Next day he began systematically to document himself. There was a medical bookstore near Fourteenth Street and the clerk there—a plucked student from the "P. and S."—seeing an easy market, unloaded rather heavily on an octogenarian enthralled by the possibilities

of the pituitary. The whole business, it appeared, was more or less hypothetical. The books, however, proved a disillusion, although there had been some astonishing instances of fairly well authenticated rejuvenations in both sexes.

Abandoning theory for practice, he made inquiries as to the best specialist in the technic and secured an appointment outside the physician's regular office hours. Young Doctor Prauter asked him a multitude of irrelevant questions, listened to his heart and lungs, took his blood pressure and, leaning back, warned him earnestly against overexcitement or exertion. As to the gland business, he said, nobody really knew anything about it. It was an interesting theory and he occasionally experimented along the line, but with no assurance that any beneficial result would follow. Plenty of sleep, a quiet daily routine "far from the madding crowd," a light diet, abstinence from alcohol and tobacco, and some gentle exercise might give him an added year or two.

Shiras was bitterly disappointed. He had asked for bread and this fellow was giving him worse than gallstones.

"You can be thankful you haven't got cancer," remarked the young man cheerfully. "What you have got to look out for is your blood pressure. It's unpleasantly high. Moderation should be your motto. I fancy you've lived a bit in your day? However, I'll not ask you any embarrassing questions. If you want to try some glandular compound it won't hurt you, but neither is it likely to do you any good."

He scribbled something on a small pad and tore off the sheet.

"Take that over to Bailey's," he said, handing it to Shiras. "They'll fix you up."

Shiras accepted it, feeling himself to be the victim of a great personal wrong.

"Why don't they know more about glands?" he inquired roughly.

The young doctor looked calmly at him over his glasses.

"I don't know," he answered. "We fellows are fairly busy as it is."

Shiras paid the nurse in the outer office the twenty-five dollar fee charged for the consultation and drove to the drug-store.

"Pituitary? Sure! Five dollars a hundred. How many do you want?"

"A couple of hundred, I guess," replied the old man, and the clerk, with a wink at his fellow behind the prescription counter, handed him two bottles full of small gray mottled tablets.

Shiras returned home feeling cheated and disgruntled. However, not without excitement, he swallowed a couple of the pills at each succeeding meal that day. He had planned to take Cecily to Piping Rock, where he still kept his membership, but a heavy thunderstorm came up and the trip had to be postponed. In consequence he went to bed early and, since the temperature had dropped some twenty degrees, slept like a log. He awoke at half-past ten next morning feeling like a fighting cock. The pituitaries! They had given him new life! Who said they had no effect? They would make him over—like that woman in the book. He began to think kindly of it as a great literary achievement, resolving to send it to some one. But he could think of no one to send it to except Wing—and of course he knew nothing could rejuvenate Wing!

It was a glittering morning—the streets rain-washed,



the sky full of white cotton-bolls. The pills certainly had put "pep" into him! He took several more with his coffee and at once imagined that he felt even more kittenish. What a pity he hadn't been born twenty years later! No doubt in another decade or so they would have found out all about glands and cancer and—what was that other thing the doctor spoke of?—oh yes, blood pressure. Too late for him, though!

But why? Slowly the great idea dawned. Why the devil hadn't he thought of it long ago, so as to get the benefit of it himself? He had been wondering for years what to do with his fifty millions, while all that time he could have had the best brains in the world working on the means to prolong life or even to defy death entirely. What better proof of the possibilities of an immediate return upon such an investment than his own instant reaction to the pituitaries? Fifty millions! You ought to be able to manage it for ten millions! But he'd do the thing right if he did it at all—go down to history as the greatest benefactor of the human race, the man who made regeneration an established fact—give 'em the whole fifty!

"Henri!" he called loudly. "Bring me my fountain pen and a couple of sheets of the heavy note-paper—with the gold crest."



## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE BENEFACTOR

THE weather turned cooler and Shiras—subsisting chiefly upon pills—continued to feel better and better. With his sense for the dramatic he had not disclosed the magnitude of his proposed gift, but had only written that he would like the privilege of meeting the board of directors with a view to discussing a possible donation toward the work of the institution; and he had received a courteous acknowledgment inviting him to be present at the next weekly conference.

He slept not at all the night before, and he arose long prior to the usual hour at which Henri was supposed to call him. The great day of his life—one of the great days in the history of scientific progress—that of Shiras Graham's munificent dedication of his great fortune to humanity! He ate little breakfast, although he carefully swallowed his pills as usual. He had told Cecily all about what he proposed to do and she had promised to accompany him to the Institute, and having dressed as elaborately as if he were to be married, he was downstairs ready at eleven o'clock, although the meeting was not to be held until noon. As he came down the steps in his immense shining tall hat, feeling his way with his gold-headed cane, the girl felt a thrill of admiration for the fine old gentleman. It was a noble thing for him to do, for anybody to do. Fifty millions!

Shiras himself was greatly excited. As they rode toward the Institute, he pictured the scene when he should announce his great gift, with a prideful swelling

of his great chest. They would be aghast! Thunder-struck! Find it difficult to express their gratitude for his munificence. But he would relieve their embarrassment by treating the situation with an amiable modesty that would make it clear that he was thinking only of the benefit to mankind and not of his own generosity. He would even put it in such a way that he would appear to consider it fortunate—if not a privilege—for him to have the opportunity to make the gift.

By the time they had arrived at the Institute, Shiras, from being frustrated as a June bride, had regained most of his habitual self-confidence, and when the motor took the slight rise beyond the gateway and came to a stop before the entrance, he stepped down from it much as a visiting royalty who has condescended to inspect a hospital or otherwise honor some institution by his presence. At the foot of the steps stood Winty Emerson and two others who had evidently been on the lookout for him. It gave a fillip to his vanity. Very proper. He was dealing with the right sort of people. But where the devil was Dominick?

"We are delighted to see you here, sir!" said Emerson. "I want you to meet Doctor Salomon and Doctor Capelli, both of our staff."

Shiras shook hands formally with each of them.

"How are you, Emerson! Glad to meet you gentlemen."

"I am sorry that Doctor Dominick could not be here to receive you in person," went on Emerson, taking the old gentleman's arm. "But he is just leaving town for West Virginia—otherwise you may be sure——"

"Tush! That's all right, my boy! Let's get in out of this heat!"

He ordered the chauffeur to pull over into the shade

and gallantly touched the hard rim of his hat to the girl inside, who gave him a smile of encouragement. Hang it! Why did he have to be an old man?

It was sizzling, and the glaring steps were many and high. The effort of hoisting his great weight to the top was exhausting, and, in spite of Emerson's assistance, by the time he got there his temples were athrob and his ear-drums beating. Nevertheless the breeze that blew through the airy building was cool and reviving. Panting heavily, he removed his hat and wiped his forehead with the cream-colored silk handkerchief—as big as a shawl—that Henri had folded so carefully, with a dab of *eau d'hyacinthe*.

Emerson, smiling encouragement, waited for him to get his breath. They were in a high, white-plastered corridor which ran the length of the building. Here and there through an open door he caught glimpses of shelves crowded with jars and colored bottles and slow-moving men in white uniforms. The building as a whole seemed strangely empty and uncannily quiet, save for a distant muffled barking. There was a smell of ether everywhere. Could that be what made him feel so dizzy?

"Won't you come in here?" Emerson indicated a small room furnished with a round oak table and a half-dozen oak chairs. On the walls were photographs of Pasteur and of his house at Arbois. Between the windows, which overlooked the Blackwell's Island Penitentiary, was a potted palm.

Not a very impressive place. But he would make the scene impressive. He would play the part imperial.

"Sit down, sir." Emerson pulled out a chair.

"I don't want to sit down!"

The reason for his refusal was not altogether clear to Shiras himself. A shadow of irritation had drifted

across the clear sunlight of his gratification. Dominick should have been there. Yes, undoubtedly! And to sit down would make the whole thing entirely too informal. It was too informal anyway. The greatest gift ever made to science!

Emerson looked a bit surprised.

"Oh, very well. Exactly as you choose." He glanced at his wrist watch. "Two minutes to twelve. If you'll excuse me for a moment I'll go and round up the others."

The doctor went out, leaving Shiras with his two associates, who stood awkwardly, at a loss for anything to say.

It annoyed him to be left standing there. They should have been all ready for him. He wished now that he had accepted Emerson's offer of a chair, but he resolved that nothing should induce him to sit down. No, he would keep them all standing to pay for their lack of courtesy. It had been very rude of Dominick to go away like that! Almost an insult! By the time that Emerson returned with the rest of the committee he was fuming.

"Mr. Graham, let me present Doctor Schmidt—Doctor Fosdick—Doctor Gonzales—Doctor Kempel—Doctor Kioki."

Shiras bowed stiffly to the semicircle.

"Won't you sit down, Mr. Graham?" suggested Emerson once more.

How insistent the fellow was!

"No, I don't want to sit down!" reiterated Shiras stubbornly. "You can sit down if you want to." And then he chuckled to himself. He would make him sit *up*! The draft from the window was cooling his temper a little. It amused him to picture their astonish-

ment when he should disclose his munificence. He was going to give them the surprise of their lives. Fifty millions wouldn't come their way again in a hurry! Even Thornton had given them only five millions to start with, although he had increased it to fifty later. Nobody sat down.

Emerson broke the silence.

"Gentlemen, Mr. Graham has done us the honor to come here with a view, I understand, of contributing toward the endowment."

He threw a glance of interrogation toward the old man, and the eyes of the others gravely gave him their attention.

The great moment had come! Shiras's heart was pounding against his ribs and there was a curious feeling of expansion throughout his body. Yes, he would make them sit up!

But he would take his time, make his offer in his own way. He crossed his huge blue-veined hands over one another upon the top of the cane and glanced at the faces before him much as he would have at a row of head-waiters among whom he was about to distribute largesse.

"I am thinking of giving you fifty millions," he said as quietly as he could. In spite of himself he choked over it.

"Fifty millions?" Winty Emerson stretched out his hand impulsively.

"Mr. Graham! How magnificent!"

Shiras interrupted the outburst of appreciation.

"No, I don't suppose you have such an offer every day. I've come to make it and I hope it will be acceptable—but I've got my own ideas."

Emerson bowed deferentially.



"Naturally. In view of your great generosity I imagine we shall be able to comply rather easily with any conditions you may care to impose."

Shiras nodded brusquely. Once more he was the iron-master, the forger of steel billets.

"Quite so! Well, I want the money, or at any rate the entire income from it, used for the study of rejuvenation."

There was no doubt about it, he'd knocked the breath out of them! Yes, they were flabbergasted—he could see that. A worried expression had come over Emerson's ruddy face.

"Your offer is truly munificent, Mr. Graham!" said Doctor Emerson. "But rejuvenation is rather a problem of the future, is it not? We should find it difficult to spend the income of such a colossal fund profitably at the present time in that way." He turned to a distinguished-looking man upon his right. "The therapeutic effect of glandular serum is Doctor Salomon's special study. The work is excessively slow and very trying. How much larger an appropriation could you use with profit, doctor?"

"I might possibly find work for one more assistant—at about eighteen hundred a year," answered Doctor Salomon. "Later on, perhaps——"

Shiras stared at them, chop-fallen. What were they talking about? Why couldn't they take the money and build a big laboratory, engage a corps of professors and hire a lot of people to experiment with? He'd bet the French or Germans could do it in a minute. What was the matter with Emerson? Why should the idiot suddenly get cold feet?

"Am I to understand, then, that you don't want my money?" he demanded roughly.

Emerson laid a protesting hand on the old man's shoulder.

"My dear sir! Of course we want it! Your offer is princely!" His voice was conciliatory, even caressing. "It is something for us to be very proud of. We are deeply appreciative. Fifty millions of dollars is a great deal of money, but it will not do everything."

"There are mighty few things money won't do!" interrupted Shiras.

"Quite true!" agreed Doctor Emerson. "Yet, as you imply, there are still those few. We can't buy brains unless they be for sale. It would have done you no good fifty years ago, Mr. Graham, to have said, 'I will put up enough millions to discover the Poles,' unless you had first found your Peary or your Amundsen. The radio had to wait for Marconi to be commercially practicable. You cannot say to-day, sir: 'I've got the money, now I'll arrange for the discovery of how to send a color photograph by wireless, or to extend the human vision through solids, or to obtain sustenance from the air!' Scientific progress, Mr. Graham, is a gradual, steady advance, along a whole front. You cannot always—if ever—concentrate on one point and take it by storm. You may be obliged to attack it indirectly or from the rear. It may hold out a long time, but it will fall sometime. The progress of science is like the rising tide gradually encroaching upon an uneven, irregular shore, until it is entirely covered. Meanwhile, there will be capes and peninsulas that will remain until at length, isolated and surrounded, they crumble away and disappear. We cannot discover the secret of longevity merely by deciding that we will do so and appropriating money for that purpose. To expend two or three or even one million dollars per annum on any such attempt would be equivalent to throwing it away."

All the life had gone out of Shiras's face.

"Do you mean that there's nothing in this gland business?"

"Not exactly that, Mr. Graham. Sometime, doubtless, we shall know a great deal about it. But we shall find it out gradually and when the time is ripe for it. The next discovery along that line may come quite unexpectedly and from a totally unsuspected source—in the course of prosecuting an inquiry into something else. We have to view scientific progress in the large——"

"But if I want to have my money used for that purpose——" rumbled the old man petulantly.

"We should be loath—very loath—to have you attach any such condition to your great gift—to limit it to the study of glandular secretions."

Shiras hardly heard him. The veins in his head were throbbing like distant tom-toms. Were they trying to make small of him or was rejuvenation just a fad, as Doctor Prauter had suggested? He was finding it very wearisome—all this talking. "Very well, then," he replied; "I'll not give it to you for that. I'll give it to you for something else. A lot of my friends have died of cancer. How about that?"

"But, Mr. Graham," said Emerson, "why limit the uses to which the money is to be put? Don't tie up fifty millions so that it cannot be used to the best advantage. Wealth is too important—too valuable! Make your terms a little broader!"

It seemed to Shiras that the fellow was haggling with him, and it aroused all his combativeness.

"What's the matter with cancer?"

"The same thing is true of cancer."

"Pish-posh! The world is full of cancer institutes."

"Yes. And nobody has discovered the cause of cancer or anything about it. Of course you are at liberty

to found another cancer hospital if you want to, but Doctor Kioki here probably knows as much about cancer—if not more—as anybody else in the world. He couldn't spend another dollar in his laboratory and get any return from it. Find us another Kioki and—well, we could use a part of your money, but only a small part—and then we'd probably feel that the men ought to be doing something else."

Shiras bit his mustache.

"You won't take it for cancer?"

"Mr. Graham, it would be wasting it—as much as if you threw it into the street."

The blood smarted in the old man's eyes as he stood swaying like a tortured bull in an arena, his great head lowered upon his bosom. He wanted to charge at them, trample them in the dust. But *noblesse oblige!* He'd give them one more chance—just one! If they tried any more funny business——!

"How about arterio-sclerosis?" he asked, endeavoring to keep his voice under control. "Don't people as they get older all have hardening of the arteries or some such disturbances? Why not use the money for that?"

"But why, dear sir, hamper the usefulness of this very great benefaction? It would be a shame——"

Shiras charged.

"A shame!" he snorted, pounding the floor with his cane. "Poppycok! I never heard such nonsense! I'm not a fool if I am eighty years old. You're all of you stark, staring mad! I offer you fifty millions of dollars and you won't take it! Well, there are plenty who will!"

"Plenty," agreed Doctor Emerson.

It seemed to Shiras that there were many more people than he had noticed before. The drumming in his ears

was almost deafening. He put up one hand to hold down the vein leaping in his neck, then passed it involuntarily through the hair at the top of his head. He swayed, clutching at the palm with his other hand. Emerson caught him.

"I can't see!" murmured Shiras. "There's something the matter with my head. I'd better go. Good morning, gentlemen. Some other day—don't wait for me—too late!"



## CHAPTER XXIX

### "MONKEY GLANDS"

HE had only a confused notion of how he got back to the elevator and out into the motor again, where Cecily was waiting for him; and once inside the car he leaned his head against the cushions and closed his eyes until the rumbling in his ears had somewhat subsided. The girl was, he said over and over to himself, worth the whole lot of them! The smart of his chagrin turned to anger. Yet he was baffled. They had actually refused his millions—turned him down flat! Was it possible that you couldn't give money away? If so, what was the use of it? Well, it would still buy the good things of life—as long as life lasted!

More than the fancied insult to his generosity, he resented Emerson's implication about the pituitaries. He had been banking heavily on them—already felt years younger. He knew they were all right, for he had personally felt the magic of their effect. Why should the biologist take that supercilious attitude toward rejuvenation? It was a fact, not a theory. Those Institute fellows didn't know everything! They had made all sorts of claims quite as sensational as that. Look at the chicken's heart, for instance, that had gone on growing right along for over ten years! It was jealousy, pure jealousy! Just because somebody else had got hold of the rejuvenation idea first they were not willing to play second fiddle! He quite overlooked both that he had offered the money for other uses, also refused, and that

even Doctor Prauter himself, who prescribed the pituitaries, had expressed no confidence in them.

Cecily began to seem more desirable than ever. She had never permitted him the slightest familiarity, but to-day, to his delight, besides holding his hand on the way home, she kissed him before she got out and called him "a dear." It was more stimulating than the pituitaries! Of her own accord! She had made the first advance! It started all sorts of curious emotions singing through him. He wondered instinctively if he were too old to marry. Serve 'em all right if he did! He wasn't quite sure who he had in mind, but he felt somehow that a coldly unappreciative world would in that case be properly left in the lurch.

And then the next instant he saw that same world laughing at him. Nobody should call him an old fool! He'd had enough of that. But she'd kissed him! He could still feel the soft warmth of her lips on his cheek.

At luncheon he doubled the number of pituitaries and then sent Henri to the drug-store for more. He also had him get out a special bottle of very old sherry—fruity, like port—and polished it off in good style during the course of the afternoon.

The more he went over the affair the more indignant he became over his treatment of the morning. He'd show them! He'd be alive and kicking when fellows like that dried-up Dominick were in pickle! The Booths on his mother's side were a long-lived family, and so, of course, were the Grahams. Tradition had it that his maternal grandfather had ridden horseback at one hundred and one and only given it up because he thought it "unseemly." Yes, sir! He'd show 'em! Make fun of his gland nutrition, would they? What did they know about what the stuff would do to a real "he man"?

Nothing on earth could start anything in a bunch of acidulated highbrows! They had no blood in their veins to begin with!

By five o'clock, when he and Cecily started out for the Tumble Inn, he was feeling decidedly frisky. She had never seen him exactly like that and at first it amused her. She could not help laughing at his Rabelaisian stories, and when he put his arm around her she let him keep it there out of a sense of obligation, for the long period during which he had held himself in complete restraint with her had given their relations a solid background of intimacy. After all, he was a very old man! So she suffered him to play the part of the elderly lover who skilfully mixes jocularly with sentiment. The pressure of her body thrilled him. She had always made him a bit uneasy. Now the echo of youth vibrated in his nerves, leaped in his veins.

He wondered about her. After all, she was an artist, a Greenwich Village Bohemian. She might behave decorously enough on parade—act prim as a schoolmistress—and be ready for anything with her own kind, on the quiet. He winked at her wickedly over the cocktails when she asked him what those funny little pills were he was taking.

"Monkey glands!" he whispered behind his hand.

He had telephoned for the corner table in the window where, with their eyes away from the sun, they watched the broad bend of the Hudson to the south—the "Tappan Zee"—reflect the welter of mauves and scarlet from behind the Highlands until it dissolved into a misty gray through which the faint yellow points on the opposite shore—both just across and far, far down the river—came pricking through and the night's black shadow crept up from the sea and devoured all the outlines.

Fiery meteors came winging and roaring across the trestlework of the Croton creek and along the narrow foothold of the tracks below; and from behind the hill the silver-white disk of the full moon forced its way through the foliage of the elms and chestnuts, tinging their outlines with a frosty glow.

The old man's eyes shifted critically to the face of the woman across the table—a sultry face with its full, ripe lips, its straight, rather large nose, its heavy black brows and lowering eyes. You could see faces like that any day on the Pincio or the Ponte Vecchio—at Rapallo or Biarritz! The cheeks warm with the passionate blood of the south. They were furies, those Latin women, once they let themselves go!

What a moon! From the gray smoke of his choice cigar as from the incense of an incantation the old man's evil spirit darted backward through the years to just such moonlit nights on the terrace at Monte Carlo or Lake Lucerne. It might not be quite so beautiful as Monte Carlo, perhaps, but it was no less lovely than Lucerne! The moon came up just like that over the Pilatus! Ah! He had it now! It was like watching the lights across the Aar from the Bellevue at Berne after sunset and with the moon swinging over the valley.

His evil spirit tweaked his ear. "Do you remember, Shiras, that peppery little Italian girl you picked up at Turin and took along to the Oberland with you in 'seventy-eight? Come, come! Of course you do! Now you recall her, eh? And that trip in the landau over the Splugen? And how you sent her packing back by herself from Geneva after that frightful row at the station?" He chuckled in spite of himself.

The spirit waited a moment and nipped him again.

"Listen, Shiras! Do you recall that night with the

German countess on the pylon of the temple at Karnak? You stole her from under her lover's nose in Cairo! But she was very discreet! She was willing to go to India with you, but you shied away from too much of a good thing! That was in 'eighty-three, wasn't it?"

He tried to bring to mind the face of the countess, but could not.

"That beautiful blonde at Copenhagen—you remember her, don't you?" asked the spirit. "I can see her now! She was only seventeen, but looked thirty! And that princess at St. Petersburg! The married one, with the fat, gambling husband! And the little music teacher at Prague! That, Shiras, was really a crime!"

He had lived! He would live some more. Women were pretty much alike, after all. Over his shoulder he could glimpse the fox-trotting couples swaying and hesitating to the braying of the saxophone, beneath the Chinese lanterns. Behind him rose the clatter of voices, high laughter, the clink of glass. Quietly he took out his flask and poured himself a drink of whiskey. He could still give pleasure—and have it. There was no question as to the girl's enjoyment as she sat with her lips half parted gazing into the softness of the moonlit night with its background of quivering lights, among which she could not tell those of earth from those of heaven.

"Isn't it time for you to be getting home?" she asked presently. "It takes nearly two hours, you know."

He agreed readily and paid the bill with his old flourish, thrusting a bill into the hand of each of the head waiters, and growling good-naturedly at them at the same time. He was at his best among that class and could play the prince to perfection.

Cecily liked him that way—better than when he was



sentimental. She knew that his rough, domineering manner was only a pose that hid a heart full of kindness. A dear old fellow!

The dear old fellow held her hand in his all the way home through the moonlight, imparting to it now and again a gentle pressure. He dismissed the motor on Fifth Avenue and walked through the Mews with her to the studio, as courteous as ever. But their hours of proximity had aroused in him a strange and tremulous agitation. Intoxicated as he was both by the memories the night had revived and the beauty of the night itself, the touch of her set his nerves on fire.

The night was like day; the moon almost lost in the luminosity of the sky. The cobblestones of the Mews lay white as sand at their feet. From the open windows of dimly lighted studios came the murmur of voices, the tinkle of pianos. Somebody across the roofs was singing "*La Bohême*," with a sob in it. The little window-boxes filled the air with fragrance, but to Shiras the air was full of the fragrance of the woman beside him.

The cream-white of her neck with its dusky shadows was infinitely alluring in the moonlight. And beyond this last spasmodic impulse of an almost atrophied desire, a terrible thirst for some life-giving force that only she could supply, he felt the horror of bodily extinction—of an eternal loneliness.

As they reached the door of the studio he said, a little thickly: "Come, my dear! It's still early. Let's go up to my den for a while. It will be hard to sleep a night like this. I've something on the ice, too. A glass of '*Cordon Rouge*' would taste good, wouldn't it?"

"Why—yes!" she answered, unsuspecting. The ride home had been a dusty one. "An iced drink would be very refreshing."

Cecily had never been in the rooms over Degoutet's studio and had a natural curiosity to see what they were like. She waited while he fished in his pocket for the key and fitted it in the side door. It was stuffy and, at first, pitch dark in the passage. Then his fumbling fingers caught the button at the foot of the stairs and the light leaped out. She noticed that he seemed to find it difficult to pull himself up, but at length he managed it and pressed another button at the top.

"There!" he panted, throwing open the door. "What do you think of it?"

"Delightful!" she answered, going to the window and lifting the shade.

"Don't do that!" he protested hastily.

His tone startled her and she turned toward him, standing with her back to the window. In this position the light from the fixture above fell directly upon her bosom. Shiras, looking at it, turned gray.

"Where—did you—get that?" he asked in a flat voice, peering at the brooch with which her fichu was fastened.

She glanced down at it to make sure what he was referring to.

"That brooch? That belonged to my grandmother," she replied, relieved at his change of interest. "It's pretty, isn't it?"

"Let me—look at it!"

She unfastened the trinket and handed it to him. He held it to the light.

"What was your grandmother's name?" he asked in a feeble voice.

"Mabel Fearing."

"You! Mabel's granddaughter! Why, you're——" He sank heavily against the window.

The little street of stucco studios which, but a moment

or two before, had seemed so picturesque and lovely in the moonlight, now looked to him like a row of whited tombs. Cecily was startled.

"What is it?" she inquired anxiously. "Can I get you something?"

"No, thanks," he answered. "Excuse me! I think I had better get home."

Suddenly he thrust the pin at her and, with a strange motion of his hands, collapsed into a chair.

"Please—go! Leave me!" he cried hoarsely, waving her away. "Thank you for coming——"

The girl, thoroughly frightened, hesitated to obey. The change in his appearance had been instantaneous and startling. A moment before he had been sitting erect—gallant, smiling, vivacious, with almost a touch of youth about him; now he was slumped in his chair, his head fallen forward, with his chin on his shirt-front, his mouth partially open, as if suffering from a stroke. An oily sweat exuded from his forehead and temples.

"Go!" he repeated thickly, turning away his head. Then as she made no movement, he fixed his watery, lack-lustree yes upon her with a glance almost venomous.

"Go!" he screamed. "Get out! Do you hear? Get out!"

Miss Coutant turned and fled down the stairs. Shiras heard the door bang behind her with a relief that was physical. The effort of screaming had sent the blood back into his cheeks. The business had made him feel nauseated. He got up weakly and shakily poured himself a glass of whiskey. It steadied him momentarily, but there was a sizzling sound in his ears that terrified him. He must get home, get to bed. That brooch! He had given it to Mabel Fearing, the girl's grandmother,

sixty-one years ago! He was an old man. A very old man, according to common standards. He might not have many more years to live. He must look out!

Bah! How that fool, Degoutet, would roar at him if he knew! Perhaps he suspected something. The fellow knew a lot of things. Had an uncanny way of smelling them out. Shiras looked around the room, wondering if the sculptor had seen them go up. He must get home, no matter what.

Shiras felt his way down the narrow stairs and turned off the light from the bottom, then opened the door leading by the outside passage through the yard to his house. It was dark out there, and the air was cool, with a faint breath of honey-suckle; over the fences and stable walls he could see the stars swarming. How many times he could recall coming out of the stable and seeing them just like that! Usually his head felt buzzy too—only not in precisely the same way. Those stars had seen a thing or two! He felt his way along with his hand on the fence. A single light burned in the kitchen. The servants were all out, for he had told Henri he should not be in before eleven. He had trouble with the back door and became a little dizzy bending over and trying all the keys on his ring one after the other. But he got it open finally, crept up the back stairs to the front hall, and switched on the electricity.

Glancing into the mirror at the foot of the stairs, he was shocked at his appearance. Was that he? That doddering old man? All hunched up! No, that was Shiras Graham, and he was sick and must go to bed. That was old Shiras Graham. He wondered if the old devil would be able to get up the stairs. He didn't look equal to it. Serve him right if he never got up! Serve him right if he died right there on the stairs and rolled

down to the bottom. Six hundred dollars? He wasn't worth six hundred dollars!

Mirrors! Mirrors everywhere! From each one of the carved gilt frames a decrepit old man with beard awry, in a dress suit, peered out at at him. He moved his arm and they—all of them—moved too. He made a face and each one leered. And this was the thing that he, Sam Tinker, had sold his life to for six hundred dollars!

The house was still save for the thumping of his heart and the snapping of the floor when he shifted his weight. Why had he let the servants go out? Perhaps Henri had come back.

"Henri!" he called up the stairs, but his voice died at the next story. "Henri!"

He looked stealthily over his shoulder at all the other Shirases. Each was peeping at him. Damn them! It was like being surrounded by a circle of ghosts in a nightmare. He must escape—break the spell if he could. Would he ever be able to drag himself up those stairs by the hand-rail with his feet so heavy?

He was standing beside a small bronze bust of Napoleon in front of the big mirror at the foot of the staircase. With a great effort he moved in its direction. The floor creaked and simultaneously the nearest figure in the glass stepped toward him threateningly. With a shout Shiras seized the bust and hurled it at the apparition. It tore a jagged hole in the glass, which fell out with a crash, leaving the brown boards exposed behind.

Teeth chattering, Shiras turned about, to find another dishevelled Shiras waving its fists at him from the end of the drawing-room. He'd fix that one, too! Picking up the bust by the head, he advanced courageously and smashed the reflection full in the face! Ha! Two



of them! The fury of battle possessed him. His fighting blood was up. He knew where they were—all of them. He wheeled swiftly. Ha! He had not let go of the bust the last time, but still held it in his hand. Crash! Another Shiras! He looked about eagerly. Yes, a row of them! He no longer felt old, but young and lusty as an eagle. He could do for the lot! A few moments and he had demolished them all, one after the other. The place looked as if a firm of house-wreckers had been at work there. No more old Shirases! Only one——

Panting, he pushed his way through the broken glass toward the stairs, with the sweat running down into his eyes and with the hum of a dynamo in his ears. Or was it the rumble of guns?

Where was the flag? He must earn his six hundred dollars! His heart was racing and he raced with it, half staggering, half dragging himself up the stairs to the library. The windows into the Square were open, and through them floated the smell of humid earth. Against the blue velvet night glowed a cross of white fire. Somewhere a distant band was playing—a marching tune—accompanied by faint cheers. Hurrah!

He heard the order to fall in. The guns were thundering now close at hand—just across the brook. The flag! He lifted it from its place by the mantel, pressed his lips to it, and waved it free. They were calling off the fours, preparatory to the attack.

“Tinker?”

With a thrill he answered “Here!”

The color guard stepped forward on each side of him. There was a rattle down the line as they fixed bayonets. Shells were bursting overhead, and a distant line of smoke marked the course of the brook. The noise had become hideous.

"Forward march! Charge!"

With a soundless cheer, waving the flag, he staggered forward toward the hall that separated the library from his bedroom. Twice he fell and twice with difficulty he climbed to his feet.

"Come on, boys!" he gasped. "I can carry the old rag yet!"—then stumbled over the threshold and fell senseless across the bed with the flag still in his arms.

Shiras Graham perceived that Color Sergeant Samuel Tinker was dead, and that his body was hanging limp and lifeless across the rail fence at the foot of the bed. It seemed entirely natural that he should be there. He had got six hundred dollars for dying, but he would have gone anyway and died anyway. And then Shiras became aware that he too was going to die. There was a brilliant light in the room that seemed to come from just over his head, and that made every object stand out with unearthly distinctness. Sam Tinker's mother came with her canary and a little girl with a pan of milk. After a while they went away. A terrible faintness overcame Shiras and the light over the bed fluttered.

"Henri!" he called in a tiny voice. "Henri! I'm dying!"

But no one answered.

"Henri! Bridget! Help! I'm dying!" cried Shiras, his eyes fixed in terror upon the body of Sam Tinker, whose arms seemed to sway toward him.

Then for an instant before extinction his brain cleared and he knew himself for what he was . . . what Tinker had called him in the diary. . . .

BOOK II

MEN

## UNDERGROUND MEN

*There are men from Sproul and Marmet, from Caldonga, Harts, and  
Lowgap;*

*Shaggy beards from Wayne, Kanawha, and Teay;*

*There are spragger boys from Eskdale; from the old works with the  
bad roofs;*

*Trapper boys from Glen and Ronda; breaker boys from Boone and  
Fay.*

*There are lads from Fry and Toney, who have slaved at slate and  
boney,*

*Who have heard the pillars snapping as they filled their loaded cars;  
Motor men and black trip-riders from the hot and sweaty headings,  
Who have lost the love of sunlight and the friendship of the stars.*

*There are gnomes in greasy mine clothes, shot-firers and machine-  
men*

*Who can carve a six-foot swamp-cut and can shoot a face of coal,  
Who have listened without breathing for the trickle of monoxide,  
And have cursed among the cave-ins until death should take its toll.*

## CHAPTER XXX

### "WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH COAL?"

#### MR. KURTZ TALKS—BUT NOBODY NEED LISTEN

JOHN, accompanied by Dominick and Degoutet, had reached Washington at nine o'clock the evening of Shiras's death. Here Mr. Kurtz had boarded their train. He had come, he said, to warn John that it would be undesirable, if not dangerous, for him to go into Bitumen County. The action of the management in publicly repudiating its former policy had been taken everywhere in West Virginia to mean that the company was prepared to recognize the union. If and when this was discovered not to be the case violence of some sort was more than likely to occur, and should John's presence become known, it might even be wreaked upon him.

The night was torrid and Mr. Kurtz's emphasis left him dripping. John, however, was obdurate. He had, he said, no intention of abandoning the property at a crucial time, particularly when the two chief local officers had resigned. He was glad to see the ex-vice-president, but he made it clear that any words intended to deflect him from his purpose would be wasted. This, however, did not silence Mr. Kurtz.

There was another reason, he said, for keeping out of West Virginia and particularly out of Bitumen County at that time—the miners were concentrating from all parts of the State for a march on Pango County, where Sheriff Dan McCallum was enforcing martial law.



These marches were no joke, either! There'd be five or six thousand armed men on their way to Pango inside of thirty-six hours! What was more, they would undoubtedly march right down the Indian Branch Valley, straight through the Mid-West property, and their arrival would add fuel to the flames. He declared that any spot in West Virginia would be preferable to the Indian Branch Valley if the "march" came through there. Curiously enough, the news had not yet reached the outside world. For some mysterious reason it was "canned," but the march was on—and it was a real one. He expressed a considerable amount of surprise at John's obvious ignorance of what had been going on in Pango County for the last couple of years. Then suddenly appearing to become convinced that he had failed in his mission, he accepted a cigarette from Degoutet and, with a grunt of resignation, settled himself in a corner next the window.

John had never experienced such heat. Overhead an electric fan sang high above the roar of the train, scattering as from a cannon's mouth the upper strata of dust particles that vibrated in an otherwise solid mass. He could feel the fine coal accumulating in a thick coat upon his forehead and the backs of his hands. But he speedily became oblivious to any personal discomfort in his interest in what Kurtz, who had begun again, was saying.

"It's war, gentlemen! That's what it is—war!" he declared. "And why the world outside West Virginia don't know about it is beyond me! Pango County, which is solidly non-union, has been the scene of violence for years! And it will continue to be so until the question of unionism or non-unionism is settled for good, one way or the other!"

"What proportion of the coal-miners of West Virginia belong to the union?" asked Doctor Dominick.

"About fifty-three out of ninety-five thousand," answered Kurtz. "The non-union fields are always a menace to the union fields, where the wage scale is fixed over a long period by contract, and where accordingly in bad times, when prices slump, the operators have to close down. The result is that the orders all go to the non-union mines, where the operators, not being bound by a wage contract, can reduce their labor costs and offer cheaper prices. The price at which a non-union mine closes down is 'way below that at which a union mine closes. That's no mere theory, either. Over in the union field in Alleghany County, Maryland, last year the union operators who had the contracts to fill but couldn't afford to run their own mines, went over into the non-union fields and filled their contracts cheaper than they could have done it themselves!"

"Looks to me as if a non-union coal-mine was more like a gold mine!" said Degoutet.

"In other words," commented Doctor Dominick, "the prosperity of the non-union fields is due to their ability to reduce wages?"

"It's a fact that the non-union mines 'most always have work—they can always undersell the union mines," agreed Kurtz. "You see, a third of the industry—the non-union—works at one level of costs; and the other two-thirds—the union—works at a higher level; and when a slump comes the two-thirds 'holds the sack' for the first third. But if they unionized the entire bituminous field they'd have a monopoly like what they've got in the anthracite field, and by talkin' strikes an' lockouts an' shortages, they'd whipsaw the public until prices were sky-high. I tell you!"—he pounded

his palm with his fist—"the non-union bituminous field is the safety-valve of the coal industry in this country."

"But to put the whole country back on a non-union basis would be to go right back to the dark ages. You'd have a cut-throat hammering of wages all over the country, would you not?" protested Dominick. "The miner would lose everything he has gained through the union—become practically a serf again. You grant, don't you, that the union has been of benefit to the miner—in the past at any rate?"

"Sure!" assented Kurtz. "There's no denying that originally things were bad. You see, I was a spragger boy myself and worked underground for ten years. I agree it was slavery. They used to cut wages until it looked as if the race of miners might become extinct. It was the operators themselves who introduced the union—in order to stabilize wages. You see, they were all cutting each other's throats. 'A' would cut his wage-scale under 'B' and so could undersell him. He didn't *want* to cut wages—on account of possible labor troubles—but as he had no contract with the men there was nothing to prevent his doing so. Then 'B' would cut back. They were all-fired glad to have the union come in and by a binding agreement over a term of years do away with the bugbear of wage-slashing. The union helped both sides! But, of course, it helped the men most, by improving conditions and shortening hours. It grew by leaps and bounds. Why, I can remember when there weren't a thousand union men in the State! Look at 'em now! Over fifty thousand union bituminous coal-miners in West Virginia alone, and over four hundred and fifty thousand in the United States. Why, it's darn near a nation in itself!"

Doctor Dominick nodded. Degoutet had fallen into a doze.

"The whole trouble is, Mr. Graham, that there are just about two hundred thousand more miners than are needed to work the bituminous-coal mines in this country, and a great many more mines than are necessary—high-cost producers that can only run when prices are 'way up. Naturally the union wants to have as big an enrollment as possible, and so it would like to see as many mines in operation as possible. The more mines and the more miners the stronger the union. This talk you hear on the part of the labor-leaders about freezing out the high-cost producers is bunk.

"Now the reason the fight is so bitter is because unless the union can get possession of the whole field no strike of bituminous-coal miners can possibly succeed, for we mine right here in southern West Virginia alone over one-third of the bituminous coal used in the whole country. If a strike is called in the union field, the non-union field is able to take care of forty per cent of the demand right off—that is to say, no bituminous-coal strike could under any conditions be more than forty per cent successful. But that isn't all. The instant a strike order goes into effect mines that ordinarily aren't worth operating begin to open up everywhere, the new labor demand being taken care of by the excess labor-supply I just spoke of.

"There's so much coal lying around here you can dig it right in your back-yard! We've got eight thousand bituminous-coal mines, with an annual capacity of eight hundred and fifty million tons, which is three hundred million tons more than the nation can use. The weekly demand is from seven and a half million tons to ten million tons. Now what happens when the union calls

a strike? The high-cost mines that it don't pay to work ordinary years—'snow-birds' we call 'em—open up full blast. You see long trains of coal gondolas groanin' down some of these valleys where there hasn't been a whistle blowed in years. In the big strike of 1919 the non-union miners averaged four million tons a week and most of it came from southern West Virginia. They finally got it up to over five million tons a week. The union had fifty thousand men out on strike, over ten thousand of 'em livin' hand to mouth in these here tent colonies, with no result except to put up the price of coal and create prosperity for the non-union mines and miners. That's practically the situation right now. It's a fool business, this strike—a bad proposition for the union. They might better let 'em all go back to work. It costs the organization twenty-five thousand dollars every week. It's cost 'em three million already. That shows you how determined the union is to get in here. It's got to get in or go bust. Unless, when it calls a national strike, the union can close down the mines out here in southern West Virginia, that strike is bound to fail."

"Will you tell me then, Mr. Kurtz," said John, "why, if there is an excess production capacity of bituminous coal in the country of over fifty per cent—if when the price of coal gets too high the farmer, as you say, simply goes out and opens up a 'wagon-bank' or a 'snow-bird' in his back-yard—if coal is 'lying around everywhere,' there need ever be a shortage?"

"The reason is, Mr. Graham," answered the mining man, "that although we have a maximum capacity of sixteen million tons a week as against a maximum demand of twelve millions, when the demand does occur it cannot be met, simply because coal cannot be con-



veniently stored, and because there are not enough freight cars to go round, and so there is competition among buyers—both those who need coal and those who think others are going to need it—together with speculation and hoarding, and prices rise sky-high. It's this 'peak' demand that keeps this surplus of two hundred thousand miners alive. It's this 'peak' demand which keeps eight thousand mines in more or less active operation, when only two thousand are needed, and is responsible for wage-cutting and the other evils of competition."

"A vicious circle!" commented Doctor Dominick.

"You've said it!"

Kurtz flapped the tails of his jacket in the blast from the fan.

"Would you object if I took off my collar? A tippie has nothing over this train in the way of dust! What was I saying? Oh, yes! This intermittent demand is what makes the union at the same time both necessary and helpless! Get me? The union is necessary to prevent wage-slashing and the demoralization of the industry generally when the operator is trying to squeeze out a profit under competition; but at the same time the union is helpless because it can't call a strike that will curtail general production sufficiently to exert any pressure. It merely helps the non-union mines and miners, and so strengthens its adversaries. Kind of funny?"

He fumbled in his coat for another cigarette.

"There's another side to it or perhaps another way of lookin' at the same thing that is what you might call a paradox. You see how the 'peak' demand keeps those two hundred thousand superfluous bituminous-coal miners alive? Well, this excess labor supply and the very superabundance of coal is the chief reason for the

regularly occurring 'shortages' and the high prices, because they make it necessary for the union to control the whole industry or go under. If they don't unionize the entire field they will just go on, as they're doing now, making high prices and prosperous conditions for the non-union fields. So, to justify their existence, the officers of the United Mine Workers, who are sitting and drawing fat salaries out in Indianapolis, keep calling strikes—and thus creating a shortage, which puts up the price and opens up a new lot of mines and creates a supply to fill the demand."

"Just as disease builds up an antitoxin," said Dominick, who seemed greatly interested.

"I guess so."

"The real issue then isn't merely whether a particular set of miners shall get a few cents an hour more pay or better living conditions, but whether the union shall continue to function as an effective agency to represent labor and attain its objects through collective action?"

"That's it, doctor! If we beat the union in West Virginia now, it's dead and it'll stay dead!"

"Do you want it dead?" inquired Dominick seriously.

"Do I want it dead! Let me tell you, doctor, the union has outlived its usefulness, or, rather, it has grown into a wild beast—that's it!—a wild beast!"

"Have you any explanation of why it has done so?"

"I have my own theory," answered Kurtz. "And that is that the union has fed on carrion until it's ready to devour all the rest of society. It isn't all the union's fault, either. Part of the blame is due to the crooked operators—fellows like Waggoner, for example. You

see, it didn't take long for both the union and the operators to discover that an easy way for everybody to get rich was to create a 'shortage'—a coal famine. The fact that the public needed only a certain quantity of coal, which could easily be supplied by seventy per cent of the mines in operation, didn't make any difference to them, naturally. The unnecessary thirty per cent wanted to keep going just as much as the rest of them did; and the two hundred thousand surplus miners wanted work; and every darn one of them wanted all the money they could get.

"They knew that the public could use only a certain quantity of coal, and would use it no matter where or how they got it or what they paid for it, but that if there was a shortage, or the mere threat of a shortage, they could unload their coal upon the public at their own price—a price at which all the mines could be kept going and all the miners kept in employment. The fact that the demand for coal was seasonal, coupled with the fact that there was a car shortage known actually to exist, had made everybody nervous. So the union and the operators got together and worked the poor old boob of a public for all that it was worth—and in this they were assisted by the jobbers, the wholesalers, the retailers, and the newspapers under their control—and they all profited equally—operator, jobber, and miner. All they had to do was to talk 'strike' and the public would rush in and buy and create its own famine, by Gad!"

Doctor Dominick smiled:

"Like the fear of disease destroying the power of resistance to disease—go on!"

"Well, that's about all. For a while we had in the bituminous field just what they have to-day in the anthracite field. Each side saw that the mere threat of

a strike was enough to create a tremendous demand for coal. So they got together and whipsawed the public for fair. All the suckers aren't individuals—you can flimflam a whole nation if you're smart enough. So the union and the operators would threaten each other, 'negotiate,' separate and come together again until all their coal was sold at famine prices—and then start in again. They're doing it yet over in Pennsylvania—got the governor completely buffaloed."

He struck a match.

"Why, sir," he continued, "I've known—and this is gospel!—I've known the operators to pay the head of a union to strike—and I've known a labor leader in one State to bribe a leader in another State to call a strike so as to create an additional demand in the first State and hike up prices."

John and Doctor Dominick looked at one another with raised eyebrows.

"It's been piracy—nothing less. It is in some places to-day. But let me tell you one thing"—he pointed his finger sternly at the president of the National Institute—"if all the operators and all the miners were organized they could get together on a wage scale so high that by increasing the price of coal, all the surplus mines could be kept in continuous operation and all the surplus miners employed on a short-hour day, producing no more coal than the country could absorb and letting the fool public carry the industry."

"'The fool public'!" mused Doctor Dominick.

"That's what Wallick is after. He says he wants to nationalize the mines. What's that but making the country support the mining industry on its own terms?"

"Suppose it did?" unexpectedly inquired John.

"If you want the community to bear the cost of

maintaining an industry thirty per cent over-expanded and over-manned——"

"At any rate it would give the miner the knowledge that his employment would be steady," said his employer. "You can't have insecurity of work and residence without unrest—and unrest is the first step—I suppose—toward disorder."

Doctor Dominick nodded.

"I'm told that one-third of the national coal bill would be eliminated by a stabilized industry. Coal varies in price now as much as three hundred per cent in one year."

"Of course," admitted Kurtz, "anything that would stabilize the coal industry would tend to do away with these infernal labor difficulties. As it is—if you leave out the mines that are operating regularly for certain metallurgical and railway supplies—most of the bituminous miners are probably working on an average of less than one hundred and eighty days—entirely outside of the loss of time due to national strikes—and some mines operate less than eighty days in the year."

A noise like a rusty saxophone from the sofa indicated the effect of all this talk upon the artistic mind of Degoutet. Kurtz grinned.

"The public that pays the bill shows just about as much interest in the facts as your friend here," he commented, perhaps unjustly.

"As I look at it," interpolated John, "the United Mine Workers want to turn the coal industry into a monopoly under union control, capable of making its own price to the public and exerting a political leverage so powerful that our government will cease to operate as a democracy, the revolution being wrought not by violence but through the control of government by the



basic industries in turn controlled by unions, or 'blocs,' or minorities."

"That's right," said Kurtz heartily. "This whole movement is political rather than industrial!"

"Have you ever considered that possibly in this day and generation the two words may be practically synonymous?" inquired Doctor Dominick.

Kurtz shrugged his shoulders.

"I've heard you say, John," continued the man of science, "that your father always declared that he would sacrifice every dollar of his investment in an industry rather than yield to the demand of the union that he employ only union men; as he put it, abandon the fundamental principle that a man has a right to a job wherever he can find it without the permission of other men working there."

"And so would I!" answered John. "I believe just as firmly as he did in the freedom of individual contract and the right to work. That is essential to my idea of liberty. A man must be free to work where and as he pleases. That is the spirit of the Constitution."

"I agree that that is so," said Dominick. "The Constitution is based on the idea of the sanctity of private property, and your conception of liberty is entwined with it, even though that conception contemplates the necessary sacrifice of certain liberties in order to have others assured to us. For example, we are taxed without our consent, we are drafted to serve in war, and we are hedged about with all sorts of restrictions and prohibitions at the whim of the majority—simply in order that greater liberty—the greater good for the greater number—may be attained. A man cannot go to New York and set himself up in business without getting licenses, paying fees, and ordering his conduct in a thou-

sand ways in accordance with requirements laid down by the citizens in general—all of which undoubtedly impair his liberty."

"Of course," assented John. "That is fundamental."

"What I am thinking about is this," went on Doctor Dominick. "The workers in a great industrial plant have assured to them under the Constitution of the United States a certain kind of liberty. It was the conception of liberty held by men who had fresh in their minds the political tyranny exercised over his American colonies by an English king. It is a political liberty that the Constitution guarantees. But, my dear John, the fathers of the Constitution never imagined what the future of the country would be, or the extent to which wealth would accumulate in the hands of the individual. Their ideals were frugality and democracy at about the same level of wealth. The government which they provided for was a political government and guaranteed to the individual political freedom.

"But with the growth of the country came a great industrial civilization. Colossal private fortunes sprang into being with a control over the lives and conduct of others almost feudal in character. And, as we both know, there was an abuse of this control. It seems to me in these great industries employing thousands of men—however physically perfect they may be—there can be little real freedom, even political freedom. But of freedom in its wider meaning—the freedom that existed when there were no great concentrations of wealth, and when master and man worked side by side—the freedom to think and talk freely, to have a voice in things concerning their own work and welfare, the manumission from dependency—that sort of freedom, John, I sincerely question whether a Constitution designed to meet the

simple economic conditions of a former era can longer guarantee. Is not the modern plant with its swiftly travelling machines, with which the worker must keep pace or drop out—a plant like Henry Ford's, for instance—irrespective of the wages paid—is not such a plant wholly destitute of liberty? A flower without fragrance, a fruit without taste?"

"Good stuff, Doc! Go on!"

Degoutet had awakened and was feeling about for tobacco. Dominick went on:

"In order to better their condition the workers in an industry claim the right not only to band together themselves but also to compel other individuals—who may not wish to co-operate with them—to join with them, on the ground that only by collective action can real liberty be achieved. Is there not something to be said for this point of view? I admit that to compel such co-operation certainly infringes political liberty and hence is subversive of our present constitutional form of government; and that the liberty which they seek collectively to achieve is liberty of another kind, which might be called 'industrial liberty,' if liberty it is. But, as the saying is, there is 'something there'! And this demand of the union in an industry almost wholly organized—that the minority shall not be allowed to interfere with their programme of betterment, or accept the benefits of it without contributing their money or their efforts, is not, it seems to me, without reason. They are working for a 'liberty' undoubtedly more valuable to them than 'liberty' under the Constitution."

"But," interposed John, "the liberty they seek involves depriving others of the right to work and others of the right to employ; it is a direct attack on property rights. That sort of liberty may be of more use to them

than the other liberty, but it certainly is inconsistent with it."

"Beyond a doubt!" agreed Dominick. "That sort of liberty is inconsistent with property, just as the other sort is an appendage of it. But that is the 'liberty' for which the miner is striving—a liberty which, it seems to me, he must, along with all other workers, gradually achieve. The urge toward it is just as spiritual as the desire for political liberty that animated our forefathers. And that was the ideal—the original motive power behind unionism. Of course the two freedoms are inconsistent with each other. One must yield to the other. It will be a finish fight. But the poor men always defeat the rich men in the end.

"Beyond question we are inevitably drifting toward an industrial form of government better suited to an industrial era, perhaps, than our present form of government. And this being so we shall, without a doubt, gradually see the curtailment of political liberty in favor of industrial or economic liberty or betterment. But here the essential conflict between property and liberty comes into play, for what the industrial worker is really seeking is not so much liberty as property, and the more he improves his condition through higher wages, greater comfort in living, and amusements, the more he becomes controlled by them and ceases to be free, just as much as is his capitalist employer. But in an industrial era industrial ideals will prevail in place of spiritual ideals. Eventually we shall have government by industry, where each monopoly will seek to exploit the public and the other monopolies, until, after price and rate fixing have been tried and found wanting, some despot will seize control of the situation, eventually to give way to chaos."

"Do you really believe that, Doc?" asked Degoutet. "If you do I'll go back to Russia!"

"Yes, I believe it, but after all is it important? Another thousand years or so and we shall have an entirely new conception of the relationships of mankind. It is part of the rhythm of progress—the toppling of the wave. No, I do not worry over forms of government. There is no longer any real danger of the slavery of man to man. As I see it, the conflict between liberty and property is far deeper and more significant than what I have been discussing. Look beyond this present conflict between living men, between the poor and the rich, the employee and the employer, the social orders. That is nearly ended. This in which we are engaged is one of the last rounds of the battle, and the people—the masses—always win.

"What we all—rich and poor, exploiter and exploited—have to face is another sort of struggle between liberty and property in which we as living souls shall be struggling to escape the domination of things. That is the great contest. The vital question is not whether the many shall compel the few to surrender a part of their political liberty to obtain economic freedom; not whether the few, by invoking the right of free contract, shall nullify the right of the many to collective bargaining and the mass attack of life upon dead wealth. No, the question is whether man is to preserve the freedom of his own soul. Men have always been slaves—to their Pharaohs, to their passions, to their gods—but never until the present age have they all been overwhelmed by goods, machines, property. It is not the rich the poor have to fear; it is riches. Not the wealthy, but wealth; the materialism that is encrusting the lives of both alike. The struggle between worker and capitalist is an hon-



orable combat of divided loyalties, each for his honor and what he deems his liberties. But goods and machines do not strike blows; they swarm, they engulf, they interpenetrate, they devour like a cancer, they destroy. Emerson saw it:

"There are two laws discrete,  
Not reconciled—  
Law for man and law for thing.  
The last builds town and fleet,  
But it runs wild,  
And doth the man unking."

"In his struggle for freedom the worker is losing his real liberty in direct proportion as he achieves his aims. For what are they? More wages, more amusements, more food, more comfort; money in the bank, Liberty bonds, a Ford car, a talking-machine; part ownerships, monopoly; property. Men are living, sentient things; you can treat with them, induce them, fight with them. But property hangs upon our shoulders like the sightless corpse of liberty. Men are born free, but they become enslaved by their possessions. The miner with his hundred-dollar Liberty bond is to that extent a slave!"

"Why should I care that others ride?  
Perhaps dull care sits by their side  
And sets us foot-men free!"

hummed Degoutet. "From all of which I gather that you are as much of a Bolshevik as our dear friends Schirmer and Lefkowitz, but that you don't think it matters a damn because we all of us are barking up the wrong tree."

Dominick laid a caressing hand on his friend's shoulder.

"Men seek liberty, Raoul," he said, "but can they ever find it when their aim is the very thing which they claim is the barrier to freedom?"

"This is all very interesting," said Mr. Kurtz, "although it's rather beyond the size of my hat-band. I'll tell you gentlemen one thing, though! And that is, whatever these fellows are after they mean business. It isn't any theory of liberty that confronts Mr. Graham, but an actual condition. Pango County has always been boiling with labor trouble. A couple of years ago the union sent out a circular saying that Pango was going to be unionized, 'regardless of opposition.' You know what that means! Well, they started their organizers in there, and as fast as the men were discharged they set 'em up in tent colonies. Things got so bad that finally the governor had to step in and declare martial law. That meant that the union was beaten, because the State was maintaining law and order, and the operator can always win a strike if he can bring in fresh operatives. The union always loses where there is adequate police protection for property.

"Well, since martial law there hasn't been any disorder and the mines have been operating with a normal force. But the fight has cost the union a good two million dollars; and all that money will be wasted unless Pango can still be unionized. During the last year they've been getting desperate and have been spreading all kinds of stories about oppression and violence in the non-union fields. They have made the union miners feel that the power of the State has been invoked unjustly against them for the purpose of crushing unionism.

"Well, gentlemen, two weeks ago Sunday the union called a mass meeting at the State capitol to discuss the Pango situation, and this Sid Halloran you've heard so

much about made a speech in which he said that the State government of West Virginia had sold itself to the operators; and he called on all loyal union members to arm. He said, and I can prove it: 'The only way you can get your rights is with a high-powered rifle, and the man who has not got this equipment is not a union man.' He went on to say that women and children were being murdered in the southern part of the State, and that the governor knew it and had refused to give protection, and that anybody who had voted for him had voted for 'a red-handed murderer.' He said they were going to unionize Pango if it took all the United Mine Workers of America to do it, and that there were already five hundred men under arms.

"Then Tom Burk got up—you know who Burk is, Mr. Graham—and said that as the governor had refused to revoke martial law it was up to them to do it. He said there would be a place designated and a time appointed, and that every drop of blood and every dollar of the union would be spent in the attempt to lift martial law in Pango County.

"Immediately, all through these valleys to the north of Kawanda you could sense action impending, if you know what I mean. First arms appeared in the hands of the unionists; then they began shooting at citizens on the assumption they were McCallum's deputies. They told members whom they regarded as lily-livered that they must 'fight, guard, or die,' and set 'em patrolling the roads along the Pango border.

"About a week later they called a mass-meeting at Kirby Creek, and began combing the union counties for ammunition and money—took them wherever they could find them, at the point of the gun—a house-to-house collection. While the miners were gathering at Kirby they

posted sentinels on the roads and would let no citizens either in or out. They got hold of a machine-gun with three thousand rounds of ammunition. A young fellow named Petry was sent to a company store to demand rifles. He came back without 'em, and was immediately shot and killed!

"Yesterday they started marching toward Pango in two columns—one by way of Walton and Handleberg, and the other by Windom and Fox Branch, which will take them right over the ridge into our valley through Thornton and Graham. Their objective is Pango County Court House, and the two columns will converge at Bitumen. Governor Handley has directed Sheriff McCallum to swear in a couple of thousand deputies out of the non-union men in Pango, and I understand that volunteers are coming in from Crockett, Blair, and Sharples Counties, too.

"The militia hasn't been reorganized since the war, and there are only a hundred police in the entire State. All the available men—about seventy—have been ordered to Pango to assist in maintaining martial law. Two State police tried to stop their advance-guard yesterday afternoon and were shot in the back. I tell you, it's a no-quarter proposition. If the strikers reach the border there will be a battle-line twenty miles long, and believe me, both sides are ready for it! I don't want to discourage you, Mr. Graham, but if you'll pardon the expression, this is one hell of a time for you to be coming out here!"

"I'm used to it!" answered John. "It's usually a hell of a time for me wherever I am!"

## CHAPTER XXXI

### THE BATTLE-GROUND OF FREEDOM

JOHN was awakened by a hand on his ankle.

"Bitumen!" shouted Degoutet over him. "Up, malfactor! Unless you want to be carried through to St. Louis. Old Doc Dominick is out on the platform already—devouring bananas."

He raised the blind and peeked out, to encounter clouds of steam. An oiler's head streaked with coal-dust emerged from the confusion—magnified, gigantic—and passed within a couple of inches of his nose; only a fragile inch of glass separating the laborer from the millionaire.

He looked at his watch—six o'clock—dressed hurriedly and went out. On one side a crowd of intermingled whites and blacks loitered about a dingy waiting-room; on the other flowed the Kawanda, its broad blue shallows rippling in the sunlight under low banks clouded with willows. Wooded hills rose steep on either side, the valley narrowing to the misty west, where the river lost itself in a great bend.

Dominick and Degoutet were strolling up and down the platform. Kurtz, perspiring profusely, came hurrying toward him across the tracks, holding a newspaper.

"Good morning, Mr. Graham," he said lugubriously. "The Indian Branch local leaves in about ten minutes. I thought you might be interested to see this." He handed John a copy of the *Kawanda Clarion*.



## MAY ASK FEDERAL AID

Langhorne, W. Va.—Several thousand armed miners, aroused by the report that deputy sheriffs on the payroll of the operators in Pango County are putting union sympathizers in jail and assaulting them, and that women and children are being killed, have mobilized here and are starting to take the field. They are well organized, and said to be led by ex-service men in uniform, and to have nurses and ambulances. Governor Manley admitted last night that he had sent a representative to Langhorne to order the miners to disband and in the event of their refusal would request the federal authorities to lend military assistance.

The crowd parted civilly enough to let them through, but John could feel the eye of hostility boring into his back. It was a different sort of crowd from what he was used to—lank men with prehensile arms and faces black with coal-dust, stoop-shouldered negroes, frowsy, flat-chested women in calico sunbonnets, half-naked white babies, and totally naked pickaninnies, all staring silently. There was something ominous and menacing in such a silence in that sparkling world full of brimming sunlight.

The girl at the counter of the cafeteria filled four thick white mugs from a steaming canister and shoved them across the counter.

"Is it true they're killing women and children over in Pango, Mr. Kurtz?" she asked. "They say McCallum's deputies shot five men on the station platform at Windlass Ferry yesterday afternoon."

"Bunk, Miss Sadie! You ought to have too much sense to believe such yarns!" answered Kurtz. "Women and children? You ain't ever seen any women and children killed around here, have you—'cept from eatin' too much pie, I reckon."

"Well, that's what they say!" commented the girl. "And there was a woman shot up at Bear Creek once. I know all about that!"

Most of the seats in the day-coaches were already filled when John's party boarded the local, and they were fortunate in finding places in the last car. The whole world apparently was on its way to Graham. A lean mountaineer swung himself aboard ahead of them, his flapping coat revealing a six-shooter at his hip.

"Isn't it against the law to carry firearms?" asked Doctor Dominick of Kurtz.

"So it is! Unless you have a license and give a bond. But 'most everybody carries a gun, law or no law. Anyhow, Keeny, the sheriff here, is a union man and expects to run for governor sometime. He don't disarm any miners, I reckon. They tell me they've been delivering rifles in piano-cases at every station up the line!"

The train started, with full aisles and platforms jammed with belated arrivals. On the other side of the car a scrawny woman with weary eyes called to a friend several seats away.

"I know it's true! Jim says after they evicted twenty men and their families over at Red Hill, McCallum's deputies fired on their tents and killed a woman and three children."

John leaned over and touched the woman's arm. "Are you sure about that?"

"Yes, sir!" she answered eagerly. "My Jim seen the telegram!"

The train had left the Kawanda and was grinding along the valley of the Indian Branch, at this season a dwindled yellow stream, whose sun-cracked bottom offered a smoother surface than the ruddy roadway upon the bank. Here and there a motor floundered and

spurted along, scattering the hogs that rooted on the sand drifts. Scarred hillsides, rising precipitously, turned the valley into a simmering patent cooker—its cover the incandescent sky. Occasionally a pine or a spruce interrupted the parched monotony of the shrivelled scrub, and sometimes, even beside the track, the starred leaves of the wild cucumber, the spreading holly, or a sarvis bush made a green patch upon the rusty, withered undergrowth. Every mile or two the train would stop beside a collection of dirty gray tents with protruding stove-pipes, crowded together on the edge of a creek, where peaked children and gawky men and women, lolling under the half-shade of the flaps, waved lackadaisically at the train.

"There's some of the tent colonists," said Kurtz. "Been here a year and more. Live on fried cabbage and beans mostly. Union strikers. Scared not to join. I've heard the 'Holy Rollers' say to a nigger: 'If you don't join the tent colony you're no brother! Sure your children and grandchildren will be marked with a big "scab"!' That fetches 'em. 'Scab'! Of course, it would be as much as their lives were worth to try to go to work. They're scared not to join the union and they're scared to *leave* it. They ain't got any interest in it, one way or the other. All they know is, they're here!"

"All they know is, they're here!" The phrase flashed on John's moral consciousness as poignantly as an electric sign. Kurtz had spoken truth. These wretched souls, pawns in a mighty game, sat there blindly loyal to their cause, hopelessly watching the heavy coal-trains, that other hands had loaded, hurrying to the sea. They knew no freedom; they decided nothing for themselves. Slaves now to Tyranny as they had before been slaves to

Property. But were his own employees, no matter how superior in condition, in any better case?

Was there such a thing as freedom, anyway? Was anybody free in this network of wheels and wires, of deadly currents and belts, of whirring cylinders and rumbling conveyors, crashing throw-tables, roaring blast-furnaces, and invisible lightning bolts that burned and blasted?

Was it enough to say that because the thousands of people who lived on the land of the Mid-West Coal Company had plastered houses, gas, and electricity, pure drinking water, doctors, churches, schools, and libraries, moving-pictures, and playgrounds, could come and go if they desired and could afford to, they had freedom? They did not own their own houses, they had no place where they could meet and discuss whatever might be of interest to them, and whatever they had of "the good life" came as a gift and not as a right. Suppose any of them had voted for Keeny for sheriff, how long would they have remained there? It was a strange sort of freedom, under which they had hitherto been refused even the right to band themselves together for mutual protection. The fact that on the property of the Mid-West Coal Company they didn't need to organize for such purposes was irrelevant. Who should say that they didn't? Surely it was for them to decide.

Was this the liberty Washington and Jefferson sought to have guaranteed to all Americans? These sodden outcasts, had the Constitution given liberty to them? Were they not indeed kept as and what they were—serfs to the power of property, by very virtue of it? What mockery to say: "We will protect you from those of your brethren who would have you join them in their struggle for freedom, for there is conserved to

you by our most sacred instrument the right to remain a slave. Fugitive thoughts! But fugitive thoughts have wrecked empires—even civilizations.

"God, what a country! It's appalling!"

Degoutet glanced from the jagged, yellowish hills, pin-feathered with stunted trees, to where the raw slopes, pitching abruptly to the river, afforded hardly room enough for both the tracks and the straggling line of shanties.

"I'd rather live in a first-class city dump."

The train stopped at a shabby station without a platform, and some of the passengers got out. The town, if it could be called one, was merely a collection of tottering hovels, chicken-coops, pigsties, and privies, clinging helter-skelter as best they could to the hillside. There was no sign of paint. For most of them the track served for front-yard as well as street. There were no sidewalks. Children sprawled in and under empty coal-cars; pigs and chickens wandered in and out of open doorways. Here, as on the heights, the earth had been flayed. In place of verdure lay scattered broken rocks, ashes, slate, empty cans, and piles of culm. Across the river for a hundred yards stretched the long, low sides of the coke ovens, and the blackened houses showed where they had been enveloped in clouds of smoke, soot, and gas.

"Must be a hog-wallow when it rains!" Degoutet lit a cigarette to deodorize the scenery.

"Worse!" declared Doctor Dominick. "A cesspool for the breeding of disease."

"Stinking Water ain't much of a camp!" agreed Mr. Kurtz, as the train jerked on again. "It's the oldest property on the Branch and can't afford improvements. After all, there ain't much chance for any with the small



amount of ground they got. Every once in a while the creek rises and sweeps down-stream whatever there is here."

"They are better off living in tents than in such houses as these!" said Doctor Dominick. "The strike did that much for them, at any rate."

Ten miles further on, where the valley widened at Eagle Creek, a somewhat better prospect presented itself, although drab and dreary enough. Beside the track stood a group of dun-colored buildings—a combination store and post-office, a "Y. M. C. A." with a bedraggled grass-grown tennis-court, and the company offices. Up on the mountain-side the tipples sprawled like gray spiders, and below rose the cold chimneys of the silent power-plant. The houses were vacant; the roadway empty. A shaggy horse was tethered in front of the post-office. There was no other sign of life.

"This is what the union has done," said Mr. Kurtz, indicating the silent desolation of the abandoned town. "They were earning seven-fifty a day here, until the strike. Now they're living on rations."

A gray-bearded mountaineer in boots came out of the post-office and stared at the train from beneath bushy eyebrows. A squirrel rifle hung at his saddle-bow beside a bag of flour and a thermos bottle. He vaulted into his seat, and with a twist sent his horse rearing alongside the engine.

"Hi, mister!" he yelled to the fireman. "Is it true they're killin' women and children down in Pango?"

The reply was lost in the puffs of the engine. John craned his head from the window and looked back. The mountaineer was standing in his seat brandishing his rifle above his head.

"Yah!" he shrieked, the tobacco-juice trickling down

his stubbly chin. "We'll get 'em! We'll get the sons of bitches!"

The train rattled over a creek, past a gash in the water-streaked hills, crowded with tents and temporary shacks of all kinds, roughly built with lathe and tarpaper. The place was swarming like a violated ant-hill. A company of the ants had congregated on the track. One of them was waving a red flag.

"These are the folks makin' the trouble!" said Kurtz. "They haven't had a chance to work for nearly two years, and they have to sit here every day and watch our loaded trains going south. There's one of 'em now—the last one, maybe!" He pointed across the stream at a snake of gondolas wriggling along in the opposite direction. "Every time one of those trains goes by the folks here say to themselves that if it wasn't for the Mid-West, and a few other non-union properties like it, that won't recognize the union, the strike would be won and they'd all have a chance to go back to work. Up to this time, when they have come up to our camp with the idea of trying to persuade our men to go out, we've simply turned 'em back. Now the word has gone out that we've caved in."

The train paused and the mob piled aboard. They were of all ages. A few were joking, but most of them were grim. Several carried rifles.

"Not a ticket in the gang!" said Kurtz. "A big bunch of 'em came up last night onto our property—to visit friends, they said. But most of 'em, I noticed, slept in the ditches by the track. They'll kill any man who stands against the union—kill him and spoil him!"

A young miner—not over twenty—lurched against John. His skin was black with coal; his forehead

speckled with powder-marks; he was dressed in greasy overalls, which exhaled snuff and sweat, but his eyes were soft as a deer's, and his expression singularly sweet and guileless. His left hand held the barrel of a rifle; his right clutched John's shoulder.

"Scuse *me*, stranger," he apologized, with a disarming smile.

"Sure!" answered John. "Hang on tight!"

"Nature's first law!" Dominick contemplated the irony of necessity by which serf was compelled to cling to master, no less than master to serf.

With groans from the rear cars, the engine heaved ahead. John searched the determined faces about him, which, save for the intervention of a few miles of valley, might have been those of his own men. Dull, perhaps, in some cases brutal—but not evil. For the first time he saw the situation unportrayed by rancor. Had Kurtz and Warren been right, after all? This boy beside him, wild creature of the mountains, child of the frontier, offspring of an atavistic and atrophied race, accustomed to the appeal to arms, shiftless, vengeful, lawless, but with a certain degenerate chivalry that put family honor above life, even if it permitted the slaying of an enemy from ambush—how could this product of ignorance and interbreeding be expected to appreciate or to accept the economic necessity whereby his widowed mother and her baby, his brothers, his sisters, and himself should be evicted from their dwelling, deprived of the means of livelihood, and compelled to live on alms in a tent by the roadside? How could he differentiate between the feudal enemy of his clan and the tyrant who drove him from his little house, even if expelled from it by "due process of law"? If he needed food he would take it; if he needed work he would fight for it; whether morally

justified or not. It was the law of life—life in the wilderness. For although they had left New York at only half after three the afternoon before, they could not have found any place more remote from civilized sanctions.

The hills were retreating almost imperceptibly. Ahead a thin tapestry of smoke veiled the sky.

"The Mid-West power-plant," said Kurtz.

The occupants of the seats got up and began pushing toward the doors. The ordinarily steady thump of what Emerson called John's "blood-pump" quickened. It was so different from what he had expected—a reversed situation! He had gone out there to exert his influence on the side of law, to defend the liberties of all peaceable American citizens upon the Mid-West property, union and non-union alike, from the exercise of illegal force even from those in his own pay, and instead he found himself in the company of an aggressive body of armed men who had the avowed intent of compelling his employees to join an organization the cardinal tenet of whose creed—a creed held as holy as that of any religion—was that only its members and no others had a right to work the mines.

The whistle shrieked and the train began to slow down. Across the valley John could see a high fence or palisade that, starting near the summit of the ridge upon the right, descended the slope, traversed the plain, and climbed the hill to the left—entirely cutting off his view of the town.

"Here we are," said Mr. Kurtz. "This is Graham."

The train flickered through the stockade, and pulled up at a long platform, where stood Warren, the ex-manager, among a jostling throng. He drew John to one side.

"I'm sorry you have come, Mr. Graham," he said

gravely. "We're going to have serious trouble here, I'm afraid—not so much from our own men as from those from down-river—the ones that came up on the train with you, and who regard us as responsible for their being out of work. If you take my advice you will authorize me to recognize the union—temporarily, anyhow—and go straight through with your party to Huntington, where you can get the Washington sleeper."

The crowd was edging closer, trying to hear.

"I didn't come out here to turn right around and go back, Mr. Warren!" said John, reddening. "I came to try and do the right thing by my men—all of them. The men are here—not in Washington or New York."

Mr. Warren glanced over his shoulder at the milling throng back of him.

"If the march comes through here, Mr. Graham," he remarked, "I wouldn't give two cents for the life of any man who didn't go along with them, or for the property either. We've had this sort of thing before—hell let loose. Nothing can be gained by staying here, sir."

"I've come to confer with my employees," repeated John. "And I'm going to do it."

Warren made a gesture of despair at what he clearly regarded as mere obstinacy on John's part.

"Very well, sir," he replied. "I shan't hold myself responsible for consequences. In fact, I am no longer an officer of the company."

As the engine-bell began ringing Warren made a last attempt.

"Once more, sir! Please—for the sake of the property—don't stay!"

"What do you mean?" demanded John.

"Your presence might excite the men to violence which otherwise they would not commit. The name of



Graham is associated in these regions with—with what might be called 'reactionary' policies——"

The train had started. Mr. Warren grabbed John by the arm and drew him along for a few steps beside it.

"I beg you, sir—while there's still time!"

John shook him off.

"Then let's beat it, as quick as we can!"

Warren walked rapidly to the end of the platform farthest from the stockade. The town resembled a suburban "development" outside an Eastern city. A row of flivvers lined a curbed asphalt roadway in front of trim cottages. A trolley marked "Thornton-Graham" came clanging by, miners clinging to the platforms and running-boards, and leaning from the windows. One, a negro, rode in state upon the roof. In the middle of the valley the great chimney of the power-house poured a coil of black, oily smoke toward the zenith, while from high up on the hillside came the roar of the loaded cars as they shot out of the mine mouths into the tipples, were "thrown," belched the coal down the carriers to the screens, and then ran back by gravity into the drift to be reloaded.

"The mines up at Thornton—the Number Two Plant—have closed down. The men are afraid to go to work."

"Afraid of what?"

"Afraid of being killed."

The blazing heat had turned the asphalt of the street to sticky gum, but the words uttered in so matter-of-fact a tone made John shiver.

A half-dozen men—obviously not miners—had closed in to protect them from the pressure of the crowd following hard upon their heels.

"We must get out of this!" muttered Warren.

A gnarled old-timer—"Papa" Joy—standing on the

curb waved at them. The color of his face, into which the coal had been deep-driven by a half-century underground, contrasted oddly with his white hair.

"Hello, 'T. W.!' " he shouted gaily. "If you're goin' to treat with the union, give me a week's notice!"

He was evidently a privileged character, and the crowd only jeered him.

Then John caught sight of Rhoda. She was in a black-and-white checked dress, standing on the curb opposite, and at first he was of the impression that she had not seen him. It worried him—her being there—among all these violent men! "Hello, Rhoda!" he cried, lifting his hat and starting toward her. She met his glance without a sign of recognition, then turned unconcernedly and spoke to the man beside her.

It was unbelievable! She must have seen him. He turned as he passed, and caught her eyes again, but her face remained immobile. She had cut him! The blood flooded his cheeks and temples. Well, if she were such a stupid little fool—what was the use? One couldn't have dealings with a crazy woman! This was a fine way to treat him after all he had done for her! Yes—for *her*!

They were approaching a group of brick buildings surrounded by a fence, topped with barbed-wire. The largest, on the highway, contained the administration offices; on either side stood the company store and clubhouse; while, in the rear, facing on an interior quadrangle, rose the new hospital, a modern fire-proof building of concrete and steel. A heavy gate, mounted with spikes, was opened just wide enough to admit them into the enclosure.

Mr. Warren wiped the sweatband of his straw hat.

"Glad that's over!" he grunted, as they mounted the

steps and joined a group in the main hall of the building.

"These are the executives. This is Mr. Graham, gentlemen."

John unexpectedly felt very tired. It seemed a week since he had left New York, days since his arrival that morning at Bitumen, yet the clock pointed to only a quarter to eight. A quarter to eight! Less than two hours since he had got off the sleeper! On the wall opposite the chair into which he had thrown himself hung a large framed portrait of his father. Right or wrong, he was committed. As his father had said that spring day at Holiday Cove, the ship had started, the course was laid, and he—the navigator—had no choice but to stand at the helm and defy mutiny.

"Well, Mr. Graham, we're under your orders."

Warren somehow suggested a first mate saluting the captain.

"Has there been any actual violence?" asked John, pulling himself sharply together, and glancing along the row of faces.

"A couple of my men were badly handled when they tried to go to work this morning," answered the superintendent of "No. 5." "Halloran had sent some of that Stinking Water bunch to the head house, and when the first car started, this gang began calling 'em 'red-necks' and 'scabs' and threw the trolley. One fellow had his nose broken, and another a couple of ribs. We didn't try to open up."

"They've short-circuited the substation up at my place," said another. "We haven't any juice."

"But there is no strike!" said John.

Warren uttered an ironic laugh.

"Halloran says there is."

John's eyes sought those of the photograph on the wall. "Millions for defense, not a cent for tribute."

"Where is this man Halloran?"

"He says he wants you to meet him and the committee in front of the post-office at nine o'clock."

The cords of John's jaw stiffened.

"Halloran isn't in our employ?"

"No."

"Tell the committee that as president of the company I am willing to confer with them regarding any grievances they may think they have; but that I won't talk to any one else; and that so long as they are on the company's payroll they must come to its offices if they wish to confer with me."

Warren's face showed approval.

"That's the talk! If only——"

"That will do, Mr. Warren!" John cut him off.

"When will you see the committee?"

"Now!"

"And if they refuse to come?"

"Tell them that I shall always be here whenever they wish to see me, individually or collectively, and that meantime—the Mid-West Coal Company *is going to mine coal!*"

. . . . .

Standing at the window of the president's office upstairs John could look over the roofs up the valley and count the eight black mouths on the hillsides above the stilted tipples, each with its gigantic pile of culm. Behind, from "No. 1," came a steady rumbling roar followed by the crash as each car flung its load into the conveyor guiding the raw "run o' mine" down the two-hundred-foot chute to the screens, where it was auto-

matically separated and loaded on to the proper cars. A great cloud of dust floated immediately above the screens, drifting slowly across to the town, the layout of which he could now see to advantage.

On the western side of the valley ran the tracks of the "K. B. & W."; on the other flowed the Indian Branch; between lay the town, with broad, well-paved streets, electric lights, and water-mains, and row upon row of red frame houses with white trimmings. Opposite the executive offices was an open park or playground fitted with parallel bars, swings, and flying rings. In the rear of this stood the "Y. M. C. A." building, its window-boxes bright with scarlet geraniums, and near by a new "movie" theatre. There was a crowd around the covered band-stand in the middle of the park, and elsewhere groups were constantly forming to listen to the impromptu orators on sidewalk and street. Every fifteen minutes the trolley added more and more of the population of the town of Thornton to that of the town of Graham. It was a round-up, that might eventually become a stampede. John felt in an alien land.

Degoutet, who was on the look-out, unexpectedly announced the return of Warren with three others. "By George! You've won the first round, Johnny! Go to it!"

The number of their escort left no doubt but that it was the committee, and at sight of them those in the park came running across the street toward the company offices.

"Those people give me the creeps!" muttered the sculptor. "I can stand their black faces and their humped shoulders. What I can't abide is their infernal way of hanging around as if they didn't know what in hell they wanted to do. I s'pose they've lived



so long underground that when they come out into this confounded glare and heat it kind of dazes them."

John threw away his cigarette. "People who have always lived in darkness ought not to be blamed for not seeing clear at first," he remarked.

Such thoughts are not for captains of industry, else they would not be captains.

"Here is the committee," said Mr. Warren, in a voice of palpably false heartiness, as John, Dominick, and Degoutet reached the foot of the stairs. "This is Mr. Graham, boys! Let me present Mr. Ed Safford, Mr. Billy Carter, and Mr. Tim Gooch."

John held out his hand. Safford hesitated a moment before taking it. He was a giant of a man with eyes almost as blue as John's, and his great height made his stoop almost pathetic. The other two were nondecripts.

"Well, Mr. Graham," said "Big Ed," "I guess you know 'bout why we're here. This property is regularly organized now as a local of the United Mine Workers of America. I'm the president. Mr. Carter and Mr. Gooch are the two other members of the executive committee."

"I recognize you as such, Mr. Safford. What have you to say to me?" said John.

Safford shifted his weight without replying.

"I thought you wanted a conference—to discuss alleged grievances," continued John. "I've come out here simply for that purpose."

"It's too late, Mr. Graham. There's nothing to discuss."

"I don't understand," answered John.

"Beg pardon, sir," replied the miner in a not unkindly tone. "What we mean is, the union is in here—to stay."

If there are any grievances they must be taken up with the union in the regular way later on, after you've signed."

"Signed?"

Safford fumbled in his pocket and took from it an oblong paper, somewhat grimy.

"Signed the contract."

"What contract?"

"The regular U. M. W. contract."

He offered the paper to John, who read it over carefully.

"Apart from anything else in the contract," said John, "there is one provision which absolutely precludes my signing it. That is the clause by which I should bind myself not to employ any men who were not members of the union. That I would never agree to. The rest is not so objectionable."

"That final?" inquired one of the other men, evidently desirous of taking part.

"Yes, final!" returned John without hesitation.

"That settles it, I reckon!" growled Carter.

"Big Ed" shook his head at his companion.

"Wait a minute, Bill," he said. "Mr. Graham's a gentleman. I've worked here fifteen years and I've always been treated fair enough. There ain't nothing personal in this."

He turned to John.

"Mr. Graham, I don't need to tell you anything about the situation out here. You know all the fields have got to be organized sooner or later. Except for the properties on either side of it, the Mid-West is in a solid union county. The Stinking Water colonists lay all their troubles to you. If you don't recognize us and sign the contract, I can't be responsible for what may

happen. I'd hate to see any damage done, but I've no control over them. If you sign, I think I can handle them. It's the only thing to do, Mr. Graham."

"No—unless you first eliminate that clause."

Carter took a step forward.

"Looks like you don't quite understand your position, Mr. Graham," he said. "You ain't got no choice in this matter. The shoe's on the other foot from what it was. I kin remember Mr. Warren and Mr. Kurtz tellin' me several times heretofore to take it or leave it. That's what you got to do now. Take it or leave it."

He thrust the sheet of paper toward John belligerently. Behind him John caught a glimpse of his father's photograph. "Millions for defense, but not a cent for tribute!"

"You can just sign on that little dotted line or——"

"The interview is closed," snapped John. "Good morning."

"Don't mind Bill!" urged "Big Ed." "He don't mean nothing. That's just his way of speaking. But, Mr. Graham, think this over!"

"I have nothing whatever to think over!" answered John. "My position is simple enough. I will recognize the union. I will even sign a contract with it. But I won't discharge men who have been loyal to me or who do not wish to join the union. That is my last word."

This time "Big Ed" held out his hand.

"You're a good sport, anyhow!" he said. "But—God have mercy on your soul!"

As they swung out Warren spoke:

"Well, sir, now that you've done all you can—won't you go back? I can send you all in a motor——"

"Go!" John annihilated him. "You mean go back to New York—desert the property?"

"We're helpless. 'Ed' is a good fellow but, as he says, the situation has got out of hand."

"As president of this company it's my business to keep the mines going and not surrender to threats of force."

Warren lifted his eyebrows.

"I wish you'd taken a little more that point of view some time back—it's rather late——"

"How many men have we here, besides the superintendents, who can be relied on?" interrupted John.

"We have the store manager, bookkeeper, and two clerks—that's four," Warren counted. "The 'Y' director, the telephone clerk—two more; the saw-mill foreman, outside foreman, and the four mine foremen—their assistants will probably go over to the union—old Bones down at the power-house—thirteen—ten company policemen—twenty-nine in all, counting your party here at the Number One Plant."

"Have you any arms?"

The ex-manager took out his keys, unlocked a closet door, and pressed a switch. A score of rifle barrels threw back the light; as many automatics hung upon the other wall. There were also two machine-guns.

"How are you fixed at the Number Two Plant at Thornton?" asked John.

"About the same."

"And how many men do you think side with the committee?"

"About fifteen hundred, but the rest will go right over at the first sign of trouble. And that does not include the two or three hundred from down river. We're facing two thousand desperate men, Mr. Graham—about fifty to one."

"Go to it!" cried Degoutet. "I'd like a good scrap."

He unhooked one of the automatics and strapped it around his waist.

"Put that back, please, Raoul," said John. "It's a bad example."

Degoutet grumblingly pretended to do as requested.

"If trouble comes," said Warren, "we're safe long as we stay here. These buildings were laid out as a kind of fort. They're iron-sheathed inside to the top of the windows. A dozen men could hold 'em indefinitely unless they were blown up with dynamite." He waved toward the park. "They're spreading the glad tidings over there already."

John looked out. People were flocking in all directions toward the band-stand, like pigeons when a handful of grain has been thrown.

"Take a look at 'em." Warren handed John a pair of binoculars. The committee had already climbed upon the platform. With them were two other persons—a tall man in a slouch hat and a girl in a dress of black-and-white check—Rhoda. Rhoda, shaking hands publicly with "Big Ed" and his two associates, giving aid and comfort to the enemy! At any rate she was safer with them than with him.

"Well, gentlemen," he said, "if the men want to quit they can. I only ask you to prevent damage to the property and protect those who want to work."

"My chief concern is the power-plant," said Warren. "If they damaged that it would be serious, for it furnishes the power for the whole valley. I'm going to see how the land lies. I'll be back in a few minutes."

He was, in fact, gone nearly two hours. From the window John watched the mine cars shuttling back and forth from the drifts to the tipples, and as each black load hurled itself thundering down the hillside he felt his



heart crushed by its weight, suffocated by the dust that rose from the screens. Why should he jeopardize the lives of his men to keep the mines running, that himself and the other stockholders might profit? What were "things" to life!

Footsteps echoed on the iron staircase. Warren had returned, and wished them to come down-stairs immediately. They found him at the switchboard, his ear glued to the receiver, surrounded by the other executives of the Number One Plant. John could hear against the whirr of the electric fans the faint rasp that was the voice of the superintendent of the Number Two Plant speaking from the office at Thornton five miles away. The sweat ran down the manager's nose from his forehead and dripped unheeded upon the table as he listened.

"Blake says that, as soon as the committee reported back, about fifty of the Stinking Water outfit commandeered a trolley, rode up to Thornton, ordered the men in charge of the powder-house to open it up, and when they refused beat them up. Then they broke it open and took out two hundred kegs of powder and a lot of dynamite. They are loading it onto trucks now. He's saying something more. What—? They're planning to wreck the Number Two tipples and then come down here and blow up the power-house!"

He plugged in and called Bitumen.

"Have you got the governor for me yet?—Yes, I'll wait. Hello, hello! Is this Governor Manley's office? That you, Tony? This is Warren up at Graham. Yes, we're sure in for trouble. They're getting ready to dynamite us. Can't send any police? Why not?—All gone to Pango? Washington still refuses troops for the present?—Where's the governor?—Christ! Hello!

Hello!—Tony. Say, can't you do something for us? Hands full with the 'march'? But, man, they're coming through *here*. They'll be marching through sure by to-morrow morning, if not sooner!—You can't leave us like this! Hello!—hello! Hello!—hello!" He laid down the receiver. "The wire's gone dead on me!—they've cut it——!"

He signalled Thornton. Blake answered promptly. As yet the valley was safe.

"That means they've cut the wires down river! Well, gentlemen?" He looked around with a twisted mouth. "I guess we're up against it! I see what they're after. They plan to terrorize the upper end of the valley and blow up the Number Two Plant if necessary in the hope of forcing out the Number One men down here in Graham, which is more anti-union. Our trouble will come when the men come out of the tunnels at twelve o'clock. They'll probably start with Regan's gang at Number One. There's nothing we can do but let 'em fight it out by themselves."

John's legs were trembling. His mind no longer dalled with any philosophic conceptions of liberty. He was concerned with life, and life alone.

Three of his men—his!—had been beaten up in cold blood. Their assailants might presently begin dynamiting the company property and killing any one who interfered with them. And Rhoda! Where was Rhoda? He looked at Warren. Nothing to be done? Fight it out by themselves? They were his men, weren't they? He glanced at his watch. It was half-past eleven.

"I am going over to Number One," he announced. "If trouble starts there ought to be somebody—some responsible official—on hand to talk to the men. I'm the president of the company. It's up to me——"

"But, my dear sir—!" protested Warren. "You can't reason with these people! It's plain suicide."

"I am going," said John.

"Then you will let me send a couple of men with you?"

"I don't want any guard. It would only tend to make trouble. I'll go by myself."

"It won't do any good. You're needlessly jeopardizing your life."

"If you go I'm going with you," said Raoul.

"And so shall I!" added Doctor Dominick. "I promised your mother to keep an eye on you."

"But I don't want either of you!" protested John. "This is my business."

"*Sacré nom!*" laughed Degoutet. "What do you think we came out here for, anyhow? Do you think you can hog all the fun? Come along, Doc!"

He threw an arm around Dominick and started toward the door.

"I won't have you come!" cried John.

"Rats!" answered the sculptor. "Have a cigarette? I've never seen a tippie—have you, Doc?"

John gave it up.

The street and playground were a solid mass of people. John, accompanied by Doctor Dominick and Degoutet, worked their way through the crowd until they stood on its outer edge. They could hear plainly what the orator in the band-stand was saying.

"You ask me what has the United Mine Workers done for the miners in West Virginia? I'll tell you! They have spent more than two million two hundred and fifty thousand dollars for food alone during the strike, more than a hundred and seventy-six thousand for shoes and clothes, more than two hundred thousand for tents and lumber, more than four hundred thousand for legal expenses—three million dollars—for you.

"If there are any scabs left here in Graham by three o'clock this afternoon you men ought to be chased out of the State. They may have a right to work, but, by God, they haven't any right to your jobs. It has been entirely too healthy for scabs around Graham—that has been the trouble with you.—Tell me! What would you do with a rattlesnake if one of them would start crawling into this meeting now?"

"Stamp on his head!" It was the shrill voice of a child. The speaker waved assent.

"A rattlesnake never did you half as much harm as a scab did!" he shouted. "Any of you who don't march with us ought to be sent over to Dan McCallum by express—boxed— Order your lilies now!"

"Pleasant fellow, that!" quoth Degoutet, as they moved on. "Looks to me as if he had 'em all set and ready to go!"

But whatever the fluctuating sentiments of the audience may have been at that moment, up on the hillsides the loaded cars still shot back and forth to the tipples, weaving the black threads in the woof of industry. From the town no human figure was visible, yet a telescopic eye might have discerned crouching forms creeping among the underbrush of the ridge above. As the three New Yorkers followed the path across the rubble beyond Graham toward Number One, the stalkers on the hillside, slipping from tree-trunk to tree-trunk and hidden from the valley by the conveyor, descended stealthily toward the river. Behind the conveyor house they lay down in the scrub—among them the boy with the squirrel rifle and the fine eyes. John and his two companions reached the bank above the siding opposite the screens just as the twelve o'clock whistle blew.

"It's quiet enough here!" said Degoutet, lighting a cigarette.

Intent on watching the mouth of the tunnel above they did not notice an automobile that had followed them from the town. In it were five persons. One, between the two men on the back seat, was a woman in a black-and-white checked dress. Silent as the hunters on the hillside, it stole across the plain and stopped fifty yards from the tracks.

An empty car came rolling out of the main drift, carrying four miners with their dinner-pails. It paused at the head house and they dropped off and began stumbling down the black hillside. One was old "Papa" Joy, stiff and twisted with the dampness of the mine. He stopped half way down the culm pile and lit his pipe. Behind him came a tall young mulatto, the sweat on his bare brown breast gleaming between the streaks of coal-dust. He took the bank in long strides, sliding and slipping, ankle deep, and laughing loudly at his successive escapes from falling headlong.

"Hy-ah! Hy-ah! Look out! I'se acomin'—I is!"

The other two followed more cautiously.

As Joy neared the bottom a stranger emerged from behind the half-loaded car at the foot of the conveyor.

"Didn't you know there was a strike order issued against this mine?" he asked roughly.

"Papa" Joy paid no attention to him, but jumped down to the tracks and started across. The young negro had seen nothing.

"Hy-ah! Hy-ah!—Here I is!" he carolled, swinging his shining pail over his head, and landing heavily on both feet amid the cinders.

"Hold on there!—Wait!" shouted the stranger.

The old man ducked his head and began running. The negro stopped and turned bewilderedly.

"Get the God-damn scabs!" shouted a man's voice



just back of John. A burst of flame leaped from the woods behind the conveyer and a volley of rifle shots crashed across the tracks. "Papa" Joy did not stop, but plunged forward headlong on the ties. The young negro staggered, recovered himself, and started to run, his eyes protruding, his face distorted with terror. Another crash. The black man spun slowly round and crumpled to the ground.

Through a blur of shaking sunlight John saw Degoutet plunging down the bank, a revolver in his hand, while Doctor Dominick tried to hold him back. The stranger had ducked out of sight behind the car.

"Swine!" he heard Degoutet shouting. "Murderers!" John followed. As he reached the tracks he heard a muffled snap like that of a firecracker and Dominick sank upon his knees, his hands pressed to his side. For a second or two he remained upright—then his arms swung loose, his head dropped, and he fell sideways across the tracks.

The earth was dancing a fox-trot, while Degoutet seemed to be running around in circles on the tracks, blindly discharging his revolver.

"Swine! Murderers!" he screamed, in the accents of a maniac. "You've killed the most valuable man in the world!—You've killed the most valuable man in the world!"

John felt a smart rap on the head. It made him angry. He put up his hand and stared stupidly at his fingers. They were dabbled with scarlet. The sun turned to a green spot. The tippie shot skyward, and the steel rails in front suddenly arose like parallel bars and smote him. He burst into tears. Nothing in the trenches had affected him that way.

When he next opened his eyes he was lying on the

bank with his head in Rhoda's lap. She was doing something to his face with a red handkerchief. He tried to smile, but could not. There was a motor-ambulance there surrounded by people. They were lifting something into it. A pair of arms swayed aimlessly.

"Why," he said to himself, "that's the boy who said 'excuse me.'"

John was overcome with pity.

"Poor boy!"

Had he said that—or had Rhoda?

Her face was close to his—her eyes just above his.

"Rhoda!" he whispered, as the fog drifted in.

Where had she gone?

## CHAPTER XXXII

### NO MAN'S LAND

THE reflected glare of the searchlight from the hospital roof—as it crept along the streets and fences, now and again lifting its head to throw a blue shaft across the valley toward the power-house—flickered upon the white walls of two top-floor rooms. In the first, upon a narrow iron cot like the one he had always slept in at the Institute, lay the frail body of Erasmus Dominick, covered by a cotton sheet. At its feet knelt the bearded offspring of a Basque horse-dealer and a Moscow dancing-girl, his head in his hands. Now and again he uttered a sob, and once a listening angel might have heard a murmur of “Appalling! Appalling!” And while Art thus kept its vigil at the bier of Science, John lay in the next room, unable to control the helm of the ship of industry, now being drawn toward the rocks.

The bullet which had grazed his scalp had done him no real injury. He had no clear recollection of what had happened at the tippie. He could not even be positive that he had seen Rhoda there until he had heard Warren's report. Then, indeed, it appeared that Rhoda had been there. Old Bones, from the power-house, had seen the motor come out from town and had identified both her and Jim Halloran in the back seat. He had also seen it steal away after the shooting—this time without her. Other eye-witnesses had testified to her caring for John after he had been shot, and to her having waited on the scene until informed by the ambulance doctor

that his injury was of no moment. After that she had disappeared, and nothing was known of her movements.

A man who had come up-stream from Stinking Water had told the doctor that he had passed a woman in a light-colored dress driving toward Bitumen. It might have been she—or it might not. In any event, her movements were incomprehensible, and no longer of any particular interest to John. Stunned by Doctor Dominick's death, he held her responsible for it. Certainly she had done all she could to bring about the present disastrous situation, and her presence at the tippie with Halloran at the moment of the shooting had a sinister significance. He could not conceive that she had been knowingly a party to it, yet she might easily have counselled "direct action." Women would do anything for "a cause." He recalled vague stories of the French Revolution. But it was hard for him to think. The sliding reflection of the searchlight hurt his eyeballs. There was a roaring in his ears like that from a sea-shell, a faint chiming of bells which at first he took to be a Westminster clock in some near-by room.

Ting — tung — tang — tong!  
Ting — tung — tang — tong!

Over and over! Only there was no "Boom!" of a Big Ben at the end.

Ting — tung — tang — tong!  
Ting — tung — tang — tong!

He had lain there over twelve hours, receiving occasional visits from the doctor, besieged with the rest of them in the fortified quadrangle. Every half hour Warren would come tiptoeing in, and give him a brief bulletin of events. Summarized, these were: that the mur-

ders at the tippie had had precisely the effect intended—they had congealed the hearts of all waverers with terror. No other argument apparently could have been half so convincing upon the desirability of collective bargaining. The town had suddenly swarmed with armed men from no one knew where—men in blue overalls with red handkerchiefs about the necks, which they called "The Sign of Cabin Creek!" They had gone from house to house demanding arms and calling upon the occupants to declare themselves. Every negro in Graham had a revolver. The club-house cook gave notice.

"No, sir; no, sir! I won't stay here no longer. All dese here niggers have got guns, and after a hour or so it goes to their heads, and they do any damn thing they please, and I'm going. No, sir! No, sir! I won't stay here."

There had been no further homicides, but the town was in a ferment, moonshine was flowing freely, and there was some disorder. Graham had been organized with a vengeance. Everybody was signing up at local headquarters, which had been extemporized in a tent. A few anti-unionists had sought safety in the company offices, along with a small group of non-partisans, and had been assigned rooms in the hospital. Among these Schirmer and Lefkowitz had made their unexpected appearance, demanding protection from the owners of the property.

About five o'clock an advance detachment of "marchers," numbering about two hundred, had motored over from Windham and gone into camp at the ball grounds. The newcomers were evidently not inclined to violence. Their camp-fires became social centres. Old friends met again for the first time in years. Fraternizing was in



order. Everybody was "Jack," "buddy," or "brother" to everybody else. The men in blue and red mixed jocularly freely with arrogance. They had thrown patrols across the roads at each end of the valley, and evidently did not intend to let anybody out of there until the "march" had gone through.

Wild stories went flying about. It was said that the governor was coming and would arrive during the night; that Charleston was being abandoned by the citizenry for fear of capture; that the Federal Government had sent a regiment to Dan McCallum's support; that a resolution had been introduced into Congress to reunite West Virginia with Virginia; that the President had issued some sort of a proclamation; that he was coming there with General Pershing; that the cabinet had recommended the nationalization of the coal mines. Unfortunately, the telegraph-wires being all down, none of these could be verified.

It was now after midnight, and neither Warren nor the doctor had been to see John for a long time. Probably they thought that he ought to be allowed to sleep. Sleep! With all that noise going on down in the street? He was seized with a strange nervousness. Where was Rhoda? Could she still be in Graham, exposed to violence and insult? What was that singing noise? The trolley? No, it was too late for the trolleys to be running. Bells?—"Ting - tung - tang - tong!" Why could not they stop that clock in the next room, or at least turn off the chimes?

A rifle cracked somewhere in the distant darkness. More killings! He could not stand it lying there any longer! He rolled over and found the floor with his feet. It felt cool—nice. He sat up and waited for the room to stop see-sawing around. Then, grasping the

iron foot of the cot, he dragged himself to the window and looked out. The stars hung so low and shone so bright that at first he could hardly distinguish between them and the camp-fires that gleamed along the hillsides. So many camp-fires! So many stars! There was a particularly big star hanging red on the horizon toward Thornton. It grew brighter and redder each instant. A fire? He watched it, steadying himself by the window-frame.

Flash!—Boom!

The whole sky was illuminated. A deep roar gathered itself from the hills and rolled down the valley. They were blowing up the tipples at the Number Two Plant.

A shout of savage joy—or so it seemed to him—rose from the streets. Murderers! He swayed, leaning his forehead against the upper pane.

Flash!—Boom!

This time the window rattled. The shouting had redoubled. From over by the substation came a revolver shot, followed instantly by a wild fusillade. Tiny yellow spurts everywhere. It was like the trenches when some hysterical fool would fire off his rifle, and then there would be bedlam. With the searchlight and all it resembled No Man's Land. No Man's Land? Hadn't he called it that once! Surely that was what it was!

He was shivering, his forehead dripping wet. Then the whole world went white, and he fell amid shattered glass, as the hospital quivered, the hills were rent asunder, and the power-house leaped into the air in pieces.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### "ON TO PANGO!"

THE flood-gates of the sky opened to let through a yellow sea that engulfed the world. Day ran its branding iron along the crests above the valley and set the forest fires creeping among the leaves. The trees caught; the ridges leaped into blaze; and the tall shadows of the tipples unlinked their giant legs across the sand. In the chestnut grove behind the No. 1 conveyor small birds began to cheep. Life stirred on the hill. Down below, between the tracks of the siding, a coverless dinner-pail lay upon its side.

A Ford car purred over the divide to meet the sun, hesitated on the summit, and slid down toward Graham. A banner floated behind it—"a banner with a strange device"—"Pango Bound." The six men who rode in it wore new blue overalls with red handkerchiefs tied round their necks—"The Sign of Cabin Creek!—Remember Cabin Creek!" Behind them up the hill in a straggling, dusty column plodded five thousand men.

From the hospital windows the garrison of Property saw the chariot of Freedom roll into the main street of the town and stop before the band-stand. A huge flag—"On to Pango"—jerked up the pole in the centre of the playground, and at the foot two men in blue and red, armed with rifles, took their places. Children came scampering out of the houses. The crowd began to collect unsummoned.

"On to Pango!" The call was flashing through the

hills—an invisible psychic force—leaping from nerve-cell to nerve-cell—rousing in the most lethargic the impulse to go—go—on—on to somewhere—to anywhere—other than where they were—on—on—to something better, or at least different—on—on—down the river—over the hill—to the uttermost purple rim—there to throw themselves into the ice-void—or into the fiery cauldron of the sun, it mattered not—so long as they were together!—all together!—on—on—on to anywhere other than there—on to Pango!

There were none who did not feel it; no hearts that did not leap to it. The negroes jigged and strutted to it. "Oh, ma baby! On to Pango!" It set the feet and fingers of all alike a-tingle. As at the first note of the Pied Piper's flute the children of Hamelin Town came tumbling forth, the miners of Graham, with their wives and families, swarmed toward the playground. "On to Pango!" That was the password tossed from lip to lip and from pipe to pipe. "On to Pango!"

A tall, authoritative man in the regulation blue overalls and red handkerchief addressed the crowd.

"They're marchin' for you," he chanted, "five thousand strong—marchin' to Pango for the cause of liberty and freedom—marchin' to drive Dan McCallum and his bunch of murderous outlaws across the border! We want you with us—every man of you!—Will you come, Jack?"

He shot the question unexpectedly at a gawky miner who was leaning against the band-stand. The man, taken unawares, paled.

"Sure!" he answered in a husky voice.

"That's the talk! How about you, buddy?" This time to a burly negro, who grinned at the distinction thus publicly conferred.

"You bet, boss. Yassir! Sure, you bet!"

. . . . .

Eight o'clock. The streets are jammed now like a circus parade. There is no band, but the air throbs as if beaten with mighty wings, invisible, rhythmic. Dynamic hexameter! From the charred ruins of the tipples and the power-house columns of smoke rise and overspread the zenith.

Already the advance-guard at the ball grounds have broken camp and cranked up. They will be at Bitumen by lunch-time. Maybe the governor will be there to meet them! They are not fighters, merely excursionists! Still, they make a brave show as their motors start down the valley and a cheer goes up from the crowd. The whole town is out, ready and waiting to join the march to Pango.

A fat man in a gray Stetson, and riding a fat white horse, comes gallumphing down the main street to the playground. He waves at the throngs that gape at him, imperially—like Buffalo Bill. He is instantly surrounded. He and the horse are both in a lather. He is important—and excites admiration. Nobody knows who he is, but all wish to obey him. He shouts to them to get ready, that the boys are 'way past Thornton, and will be along any moment. They had better begin getting into some sort of formation. The main column must not be held up. The Graham men—the men of the Number One Plant—begin obediently to align themselves.

"Number Four men this way! Hey, you, Pete, come on over here! Number Three men this way! Hi, Jo, you damn little dago! Step lively, now!"

The white-horse man curvets about the playground.



He thinks they might just as well start along, without delaying. They have a long way to go before night. He jerks the bridle reins, and the old rocker backs snorting out into the centre of the asphalt, scattering the crowd. Come on! On to Pango! He will lead the way—start the procession. The men from No. 4 step out after him. Others follow. The women and children begin to move along with them—to keep them company. There is a general movement, a flow toward the westerly end of the town.

To the east—up the valley—John and Degoutet standing at the hospital windows can see the dust-cloud raised by the marchers. It moves rapidly toward Graham, where the exodus is now well under way. The town is moving out in a body. There is no disorder, except a small scrap in front of the fire-house, when men in blue and red try to make the company doctor fall in with them. He will need a doctor himself if he does not go! They swear he will need an undertaker. He goes. So does the station-master, the telegraph-operator, the Y. M. C. A. superintendent.

Everybody is going. Everybody is marching. "Hello, there! Come along! No matter! Sure, walk with me, Jack!" Women with tin pails ladle out water to the sweating pedestrians, and hurry across the grass-plots for more. They and a few small children are the only stationary human beings. Everybody else is moving. A flock of flivvers sweeps down over the hill and into the town, and somewhat discomposes the procession. There is a drunken tooting from an engine, as it drags in a string of day-coaches loaded with miners from Thornton and stops puffing at the station. The strikers have seized the train and shanghaied the crew at the points of their revolvers. The cars bear huge signs—two-

foot black letters upon white canvas—"On to Pango."  
"Liberty and the Union. One and Inseparable."

. . . . .  
They are coming over the rise now—a scuffling, rag-amuffin crew—singly, in squads, in companies of blue and red, kicking up the dust into a pillar of cloud that hangs like a silver snake over the column and marks its progress down the valley.

These are the miners, dwellers of the underworld, who work in darkness and in the shadow of death;—"run o' mine" men from the cross-cuts, the tipples, and hoisting cages; breathing garlic and whiskey, and reeking of burned powder.

Scrawny lads from Lincoln and Boone, shaggy beards from Harts and Queen's Ridge; tough nuts, rough ones, straight from the workings of Madison and Marmet, Marfork, Manila, Lauta, and Ashford; men who know the old works with the bad roofs.

Spraggers from Danville, trapper boys from Rhonda, breaker boys from Carbon, who have picked out tons upon tons of slate and boney with bloody fingers; motor-men and trip-riders from the hot and sweaty headings of Huddelton and Lowgap, who run the switching dummies and steer the shrieking empties through the soundless avenues of whitewashed tree-trunks.

Hard-faced guys from Jaretta, Orgas, Racine, and Kanawha; hired-and-fired men; desperate fathers of families from New River and Willis Branch, who with their women have listened each morning for two years, tense and haggard, wondering if the whistle is going to blow; men who had only eighty days' work last year, who earned less than five hundred bucks apiece last year.

Men from Scott, Peytona, Fay, and Wingate, from

far-off Wayne, Cabell, Raleigh, and Putnam; who have dropped their tools and rushed out of the tunnels because they have been told that Dan McCallum's deputies are killing women and children over in Pango.

Polaks from Eskdale and Cabin Creek, machine-men and shot-firers with arms of iron who can hold a bucking air-drill, carve a six-foot swamp-cut, and shoot down a face of coal as you would blow a crumb off the table; wild men from Stark and Mordue; bad men and bums from Greenville, Giles, Ferndale, and Paint Creek; loaders, rope-riders, assistant pit-bosses, mule-drivers, track-layers, brakemen, pump-men, masons, and brattice-men, road-cleaners, and timber-men, who work in a tiny circle of light inside the blackness; all underground men except the engine-helpers, who check the cables streaming over the wheel-sheaves down to the reeling-drums.

Gnomes in greasy mine clothes, who work alone or with a buddy in distant rooms far from the main passing branch, who have heard their own hearts beating in the soundless tunnels, as they listened breathless to the trickle of the deadly carbon monoxide, seeping through the walls and roof cracks; who have scented the soft, pungent smell of burning coal and have staggered blindly toward the cages, choking and gasping for air.

They have heard Death chuckling along the galleries, in the crackling walls and snapping timbers, in the distant muffled boom of the buckling hillside; they have run white-eyed through the tunnels, or, too late, trapped by the falling roofs, have cursed among the cave-ins, until carried out unconscious into the circle of faces at the mine mouth, to suffer the agony of being pumped back to life with the pulmotor.

Terrible men these! All of them on the Logan and Mingo blacklists; Reds, booze-fighters, profaners of

Christ, squirting obscenity through their teeth with their tobacco juice; Sabbath breakers, liars, adulterers; sons, husbands, fathers, brothers: men who have lost the love of sunlight and the friendship of the stars; who cling blindly to one another and to the union. Sheep! Whose shepherd is Halloran—Big Jim Halloran! Pango! Pango! On to Pango!

See those boys from Wildcat—sixty of them, in new blue overalls? Men whose daily music is the whine of the drills and the scream of the generators! Yesterday they were working under ground. They still smell of sweat and burning oil. How the bright tin drinking-cups at their belts jog and glisten! They're singing:

"There'll be a-hot time—in Pan-go—to-night!"

How they jazz it and rag it! Pango! Pango! On to Pango!

The column parts to let the ambulance go rumbling through—the improvised ambulance, marked "AMBU-LANCE" in huge black letters, that all the world may know just what it is—an ambulance—an ambulance for Sheriff Dan McCallum over in Pango!

Behind it follow two motors carrying women in nurses' uniform, with the letters U. M. W. upon their caps. The marchers treat them with respect. "Hi, thar, ladies!" they call to them. "Mornin', ma'am! See you in Pango!"

What is that grinding along on first? A soup kitchen? And two camions with tents? Where did they come from? Ask Jim Halloran,—who is *not* going to Pango——

Who bought those wagon-loads of groceries? The barrels of flour, the tubs of butter, the bacon, the canned goods—the jugs of "moonshine"? Ask Jim Halloran! You know us, Halloran!

Where did those new Mausers come from? Where the Springfields? Where the Enfields? Oh, you Halloran! Foxy Jim Halloran!

Look at that bunch of niggers from Lory! A hundred and twenty of them—each with a revolver the size of a field-piece! Where did they get them? Ask Jim Halloran! Shrewd Jim Halloran! Pango! Pango!

Who has promised the increased wages; the pay for dead work, and double for overtime? Who has scattered the handbills through the mining camps telling how McCallum is killing women and children? Ask Jim Halloran! Old Fox Halloran! To hell with the deputies! Kill the sons of bitches! Kill McCallum! Hurrah for Liberty! Hurrah for the Union! Hurrah for Halloran! Hurrah for everybody!—Pango! Pango! On to Pango!



## CHAPTER XXXIV

### INTESTATE

CHARLESTON — Washington — Philadelphia — New York !

To John it seemed incredible that he should be sitting beside his mother and Ditty in the shrouded drawing-room of Forty-seven, with that incongruous group of human beings, supposed through blood or affection to be "connected with the family." Was it possible that he actually had been to the coal fields?

Instinctively he lifted his hand and ran a finger along the ridge of slightly abraded flesh on his scalp. No, he had not dreamed those experiences out there. He carried his stigmata. Yet how preposterous that he should be where he was, in formal black clothes, looking at Mr. Pepperill and at all those strange rusty people who had suddenly appeared from nobody knew where, yet all of them bearing a remote, if grotesque, resemblance—often in a single feature only—to one another and to himself. Preposterous people! And in a way Pepperill seemed more preposterous than any of the rest of them; even more preposterous than Bellamy Wing in his white chopped side-whiskers, over there by the portières; or the Reverend Thrum rosily smug in his smartly tailored clericals. It was not preposterous that Great-uncle Shiras should be dead and buried; it was merely preposterous that they should all be acting as if it mattered so much, when John knew that it really did not matter at all.

Mr. Pepperill, rigidly perpendicular beneath a row of

empty picture-frames, cleared his throat and glanced about the assembled company. He frankly enjoyed his importance on these occasions, as red-letter days in his professional life. He had sat in the same chair, in the same spot, and cleared his throat in precisely the same way after the funeral of Mungo Graham in 1886, of Ezra Graham in 1905, and of Thornton Graham a few weeks before—not to mention that of Ezra's second wife, Sarah (Booth), in 1870, the mother of him whom they had just lowered to his final resting-place at Woodlawn to the quavering strains of "Peace, perfect peace" rendered by a high-priced quartette from St. Timothy's.

The fact that during life Shiras had never been known to go inside a church or to express any but a profane interest in matters ecclesiastical had in no way damped the enthusiasm of the Reverend Mr. Thrum in his official capacity of vicar-in-ordinary to the family of Graham. In vulgar but cogent phrase, he was there "with bells on"; and so, with half a chance, would have been the bishop himself. Millionaire old bachelors are worthy of attention. They frequently declare unexpected testamentary dividends. Therefore the Reverend Thrum had taken pains to mention over their after-dinner Coronas at both Mr. Levi's and Mr. Thornton Graham's houses—although not too pointedly—the need of a new rectory—in the same architectural style, of course, as the new St. Timothy's. Thus having cast his bread upon the waters he had an excusable curiosity to find out whether it had floated and, if so, whether it was going to land on Ararat. Tiny seeds of suggestion had a surprising way of sprouting.

Yet Thrum was an upstart compared with Pepperill, who was only ten years younger than Shiras himself and had acted as his counsellor for over half a century. To

the rheumy eyes of Levi, crouched under the empty frame sacred to the "Miser," the lawyer looked precisely as he had at Grandfather Mungo's funeral in 1886—tight frock-coat, heavy black Ascot, round bloodstone scarf-pin, gray trousers, tiny shining patent leathers—exactly the same! At that instant Mr. Pepperill put up a gloved hand and coughed again. this time with a slightly greater emphasis.

The gathering was small, and filled only one end of the room, which, funereal enough at most times, was rendered even more depressing than usual by the coverings upon the upholstery and by the absence of hangings. The thermometer by the window beside John registered eighty-six degrees Fahrenheit, and the tightly drawn blue window-shades behind him—even if they flapped now and then—excluded all fresh air.

Mrs. Graham sat between the windows, with John and Ditty; then came Great-uncle Levi and his son Homer; opposite them and along the wall were ranged uncomfortably half a dozen strangers of both sexes, presumably relatives on the maternal side. Nobody knew who all of them were—not even Mr. Pepperill. Shiras's mother, Sarah Booth, had had a younger sister, Abigail, who had married up-State somewhere. There might even have been a brother—he did not remember. One didn't like to ask their names exactly; and anyhow—he chuckled infinitesimally—it wouldn't make much difference.

Near the door, not far from the arched fingers of the Reverend Thrum, and so perhaps as if seeking benefit of clergy, huddled two elderly women in dresses a year or so out of style. Behind, and half hidden by the piano, sat Henri, Shiras's faithful French valet, who had been devoted to his master, in spite of his querulousness, his

outbursts of anger. He had given the best thirty years of his life to his service. He would go back now to France and end his days, living in memory and upon the generosity of his patron. Ditty held her handkerchief to her eyes. She, too, had loved the old man.

Mr. Pepperill cleared his throat for the last time, and carefully uncrossed his legs.

"I have taken the liberty of asking you all here in order that there might be no delay in the distribution of Mr. Shiras Graham's estate. I believe that all the next of kin, on both sides, and of the half, as well as of the whole, blood are here, which will render it unnecessary to send out the customary advices."

He bowed toward the strangers.

"The fact is," he said, raising his voice and enunciating with care, "my client died intestate—he left no will, in other words. His property will devolve according to the New York laws of inheritance."

John was flabbergasted. He supposed that everybody made a will as a matter of course; nevertheless, the result of his great-uncle's failure to do so did not at once occur to him.

Mr. Pepperill continued:

"Mr. Graham had for many years, to my knowledge, given a great deal of thought to the ultimate disposition of his fortune. At one time he contemplated making a large gift to the National Institute. At others he considered and talked over with me various schemes, none of which ever definitely crystallized. Like many well-intentioned people, he put off making a will until it was too late. The law therefore must distribute his estate for him." He paused.

A little old man in a frock-coat much too long for him, leaned forward timidly.

"Do you mean to say, sir, that since our relative did not leave any will his property will *all* go to his next of kin?"

"Precisely," nodded Mr. Pepperill, wondering which of the Booths the old fellow could be.

The speaker turned significantly to a faded woman at his side.

"Is it—er—in order to inquire the extent of the estate?"

"Certainly," answered the lawyer. "It will run to a little over fifty millions."

The faded lady seemed frightened. It was clear that the amount exceeded her mental grasp.

"Dear me!" she gasped.

A younger woman with a refined and intellectual face asked diffidently:

"Will you tell us, please, how it will be divided?"

"Under the Decedents' Estate Law," replied Mr. Pepperill, "where there are brothers or sisters, or living children of deceased brothers or sisters, the estate is divided between them share and share alike, *per stirpes* and not *per capita*—that is to say, the children of a deceased brother or sister take the share that would otherwise go to the parents, if living, without distinction between the whole and the half blood."

John saw that the old man was clutching his knees to conceal the trembling of his hands.

"We are the descendants of a deceased sister—" he began.

Mr. Pepperill gave a half-shake of his sparrowlike head.

"Mr. Shiras Graham had no sisters," said the lawyer in a kindly tone. "That is—none that I ever heard of!"



The little old man became suddenly pale. He swallowed.

"N-not a sister of Mr. Graham's," he explained, "but of Mr. Graham's mother, Abigail Booth that was. You may recall she married Ephraim Tarbox, of Owego?"

Mr. Pepperill assented vaguely.

"The statute refers only to brothers and sisters of the deceased, Mr. Tarbox," said the lawyer.

"Bangs," corrected the little old man.

"Mr. Bangs!" apologized the lawyer.

"I don't understand exactly."

"If the deceased leaves a brother or a sister, or the children of a deceased brother or sister, nobody else gets anything."

There was a long pause, during which John could hear the flies buzzing on the pane behind him.

"Mr. Graham's next of kin as defined by law," went on the attorney, "are Mr. Levi Graham, his brother, and the children of his deceased half-nephew, Mr. Thornton Graham, who was the only son of his half-brother Ezra."

The silence which followed this announcement was pregnant with emotion. The younger woman stirred.

"My name is Esther Booth. I am a public-school teacher in Elmira," said she modestly but with composure. "I am a granddaughter of Edward, the younger brother of Sarah Booth—Mr. Graham's mother. That is to say, I am Mr. Graham's own first cousin, once removed. That seems quite as near as a half-great-nephew or niece."

Mr. Pepperill smiled at her.

"No doubt it is, only the law doesn't recognize the fact."

"Do you mean that none of us—on his mother's side—gets *anything*!"

"Nothing."

She put her hand quickly to her lips and leaned back. John grew warm. What a shame that all this money should go to a toothless octogenarian like Levi, to his own brothers and sisters and to himself, when only a little would have meant so much to this fine young girl! He would speak to Mr. Pepperill—see if something could not be done——

Mr. Bangs had got up and was standing in front of Mr. Pepperill, his frock-coat making him resemble a little wooden image from a Noah's ark.

"Do you mean to say the Booth side of the family don't get anything? That it all goes to the Grahams—half-relatives? Why that old lady over there—Mrs. Handman—is a first cousin! Her mother was own sister to Shiras Graham's mother. That's nearer than any of these half-great-nieces and nephews. They don't need the money. And she's a very poor woman!" He seemed to be getting excited.

Decorous Mr. Pepperill hated scenes, particularly on an occasion like this.

"My dear sir! The law recognizes no distinction in blood. What you call a half-relative is just as good in law as a full relative. Brothers take before aunts. So do half-brothers and their living descendants. Mr. Ezra Graham was Mr. Shiras Graham's half-brother. Were he alive, he would inherit to the exclusion of Mrs. Handman's mother, were *she* alive. In the same way, Mr. Thornton Graham, were he alive, would, as his father's representative, take before Mrs. Handman. And so Mr. John Graham and his brother and sisters, as their father's and grandfather's representatives, take before Mrs. Handman."

"It doesn't sound quite right to *me*!" asserted Mr. Bangs, looking around as if for support.

"Nor me, either!" declared a tall man with a blue jaw and drooping black mustache. "We don't have to take this man's word for it. I understand he's hired by the Grahams. We ought to consult a lawyer of our own."

Mr. Pepperill arose.

"It will make no difference whom you consult! You can't change the law. It is unfortunate that things turned out this way, but—there you are."

Mr. Bellamy Wing, farther down the line, gave signs of eruption. He had counted on Shiras as good for at least fifty thousand—if not a hundred! And now he saw half a century of faithful service dissolve like a mirage into the desert air, leaving only a tiny oasis of brokerage fees at twelve-and-a-half per cent.

"Are you quite sure, Mr. Pepperill, that our—er—friend left no will? I have heard him discuss his testamentary intentions frequently. I could even name some of those he proposed to benefit—together with the amounts."

"I think many of us could!" whispered one of the two elderly women, turning a flushed cheek to Mr. Thrum, as Mr. Wing subsided.

"My dear Miss Fairlady," answered Mr. Pepperill, "when a man dies intestate, the law presumes that he desires his property to be distributed in accordance with the statute. If he made any contrary declarations the inference is"—the lawyer looked at her over his glasses—"that he changed his mind."

Mr. Thrum caught the eye of the attorney. He had no intention of letting the Bar get the better of the Church. Everything was all right for Pepperill, who, no matter what happened, would get his commissions as executor and his fees into the bargain.

"I think, sir," he said with some severity, "that I may perhaps be able to shed a little light on the situation. Our departed friend often talked over his affairs with me—particularly his urgent wish to build a new rectory for St. Timothy's. Indeed, his interest and ardor were such that I feel confident—nay, certain—that he must have executed a last will and testament in which he incorporated some such provision—if no others!"

Mr. Pepperill did not reply. He had a hearty contempt for the snivelling sycophant who from the carved pulpit of St. Timothy's inveighed each Sunday against the sin of materialism, and then within the hour could inevitably be found lapping up the crumbs and perhaps as well a few drops of "pre-war stuff" from the damask of his more wealthy parishioners. Had he been willing to violate professional confidence he could—as he said to himself—jolly well have put the lying little parson in a hole. Yet in that shrivelled organ known as his heart Mr. Pepperill had a considerable regard for the institution which Mr. Thrum represented; and he wished that Shiras had seen fit to do the handsome thing, if only for the sake of the gesture. What was a rectory? The Church and Property had always stood together. *Noblesse oblige!*

"I feel sure of it!" declared Bellamy Wing.

"Ptah!" cackled Levi suddenly, pounding with his cane upon the floor. "You never got a cent out of Shiras in his whole life—and you know it, Thrum!"

The twenty-five millions that had just fallen into his lap seemed to have galvanized the old gentleman. "And you won't out of me, either! Alive or dead! He-he!"

He shook his aged dewlap and peered round at them archly.

"Ssh! Father!" said Homer, laying a clamlike hand on his knee.

"Don't shish at *me!*" flared the old fellow, turning upon the dyspeptic collector of death-masks who called him father. "I won't be spoken to that way." He began to whimper softly to himself.

Mrs. Graham touched John's arm.

"We ought to get Uncle Levi away. The heat and the strain have been too much for him."

Levi heard his name and glanced over at her.

"Eh? How's that? This money from Shiras will just about put me on my feet! You know, Jean, there has been a terrible depreciation in real estate. The market has all gone to pieces. The repairs eat up everything. I don't get two per cent on my money! If it hadn't been for this I might have had to go to the poor-house."

"Yes, I know, uncle," she replied soothingly.

The two old ladies who had been seated near the Rev. Thrum now approached Pepperill.

"We are in a very embarrassing situation," the first fluttered, yet not without a certain confidence. "Mr. Graham promised to take care of us in his will and make us independent for the rest of our lives." She lowered her voice. "We both have letters——"

"I suggest that you come to my office," said the lawyer hastily in the same tone. "Something can undoubtedly be arranged. In fact—but, never mind! Shall I look for you to-morrow—at eleven, say?"

The Reverend Thrum and Mr. Bellamy Wing tendered their condolences stiffly to Mrs. Graham and John. They did not expatiate upon the virtues of Great-uncle Shiras. Each seemed to bear a grievance. They went out together, shortly followed by all the Booths.



"To tell you the truth," muttered the man with the blue chin, "I thought the old rooster had died twenty years ago at least!"

"And do you know," said Bellamy Wing as he and Thrum paused on the curb, "that he let me pay for his lunch almost every day for thirty years?"

Inside Mr. Pepperill was bidding good-by to Mrs. Graham.

"I'm sorry it happened this way," he apologized. "It might have been better to let things take their usual course, but no one could have imagined——! Some people have no sense of decency! None whatever!"

"I think it was all utterly disgusting!" Ditty breathed furiously through pinched nostrils. "Great-uncle was a dear old man and no one even mentioned him."

Homer helped his father to his feet. Mrs. Graham went over and took Levi's thin, crackly hand.

"Won't you both stay to lunch?" she asked. "Mrs. Gavin can get us all something. Ditty and I do not go back to Mount Desert until this evening."

"Hey? Oh, I don't take any lunch," answered the octogenarian. "And Homer—'hot water and a little boiled fish!' Ha-ha!—that's all he eats, you know! Well, I suppose I'll be the next to go! Who'd ha' thought it would have been Shiras! I tell you, Jean, as one gets older it pays to be abstemious. I always said to him: 'Shiras, if you'd only drink barley water instead of what's in that Jeroboam, and leave off red meat.' But no!" He turned with unexpected harshness upon John. "I hope you saw where Mid-West went to yesterday?—Twenty-seven!"

His sunken lips, covered with their short white stubble, quivered.

"Do you know how much I paid for that stock origi-

nally? Five million dollars! To-day it's worth at the most a million and a quarter! Nearly four millions your performances have cost me!"

Suddenly every vestige of color left his skin.

"Four?—Eight!—For Shiras's stock has gone down too! The twenty-five millions that come from him won't be twenty-five millions!"

He winced and put his hand to his side.

"Can I give you a lift?" asked Mr. Pepperill. "My car is outside."

Levi nodded without replying.

"Good-by, Jean!" he croaked, ignoring John. Then cautiously feeling his way with his cane he allowed Homer to lead him to the door.

Everybody had gone, and John proposed that they should wait for lunch in the den. Henri was still sitting by the piano with his head on his arms. He stood up as Ditty called his name, a stocky man with broad shoulders and fine large head covered with curly hair just turning to gray. His eyes were swimming.

"This is a bad day for me, madam, when my good kind master is gone. Only to think! I have been with him for thirty years, and now not any more! But perhaps it is better. For he was not happy! *Non!* He was no longer strong. You know, madam, how he rub his forehead when his head it whirl around? He would ask me, 'Say, Henri, what is the matter, eh? My brain is all gone!' He did not want to live. He say it is a terrible thing to live so long like him. He was very, very sad. And such a good, kind man. He leave me thirty thousand dollar in his will—one thousand dollar for every year I work for him. It is a fortune, madam! I can go back now to France and be with my old mother and my sister. But I shall miss him. And

I am very sad that I was not with him when he died. It is sad to die alone. I love that old man very much, madam."

John caught his mother's glance. Henri had been too overcome to comprehend his master had died without carrying out his promise. He was considering what to do when Ditty threw her arms about Henri's neck and kissed him on the cheek.

"Poor Henri!" she cried. "Poor, dear Henri! We are so sorry for you! You were so kind and faithful to dear old nunkie. And you loved him so! More than any of us, I think. No money could ever repay such devoted service. No, you must never work any more. The money—I think Great-uncle Shiras told me it was fifty, not thirty, thousand dollars—will be put for you in the *Crédit Lyonnais* at once. So that you will not have to wait for it. So, dear Henri, you can go back to France to-morrow, if you wish! But you must not forget us! Promise! And we shall come to see you in St. Gaudens the next time we go abroad."

The papers, none of which had given less than two columns to Erasmus Dominick, carried only a couple of sticks relating to Shiras Graham. That in *The Post* was as full as any. It read:

Shiras Graham, formerly president of the Binghamton Steel Company, a director in the Mid-West Coal, the Calizona Copper, and various other corporations, and associated with the firm of Graham & Co. in many of its enterprises, died of apoplexy at his Washington Square residence last evening, in his eighty-first year.

Born in New York City, he was keenly interested in its development and lived to see many and great changes. While, owing to ill health, he had lived of late years practically in retirement, he was at one time conspicuous socially and much given to entertaining. He never married.

Mr. Graham was a veteran of the Civil War, having served with distinction as a member of the 87th New York Regiment, and up to the day of his death was a leading figure at its annual reunions. The interment will take place to-morrow in the family lot at Woodlawn.

The writer forgot to mention that Shiras had also been killed at Brandy Creek carrying the Flag of Liberty.

## CHAPTER XXXV

### THE ABSENTEE

THE very number and magnitude of John's anxieties carried him through a period when without them he might have gone under. Rightly or wrongly he held himself—with Rhoda—responsible for Doctor Dominick's death. Stupefied by the sudden shock of it at Graham, he had been overwhelmed by its enormity on his return to New York. By common accord, it seemed, Erasmus Dominick was to be accepted as having been the greatest man of his time—the man who had contributed more than any other toward the progress of the race. Even the flags upon the municipal buildings were half-masted, a tribute paid usually only to holders of public office. To his funeral had come delegations from all over the country, and his pall-bearers included the most distinguished men in official and professional life throughout the United States. In life the most retiring of men, he had become in death a colossal figure upon which all bent their gaze and cried "There was a MAN!" And because Dominick for some incongruous reason had loved Degoutet, John could not bear to have the sculptor out of his sight.

As for Rhoda, his heart was bitter against her. He now knew of her association with Halloran and of the fact that she had gone to the tipples in his company at the time of the homicides. He had seen her twice since his return to New York—once in the distance and once face to face upon Fifth Avenue. This time it had been



he who had failed to recognize her! That cut direct in the street at Bitumen had finished him. He had at least credited her with courage. So in spite of the flash that crossed her face at sight of him, the quick lift of her chin, the spontaneous movement of her whole body toward him, he had looked through and beyond her.

Had it not been for Rhoda, he told himself, he would not have acted so precipitously in the first place and the disaster at Graham might have been averted. His father had given years to the study of conditions in the bituminous coal fields. So had Warren, Kurtz—all of them. And he had rushed in and turned everything topsy-turvy simply because an impulsive girl had repeated to him a hard-luck story about the sufferings of the miners which she had heard from a couple of Bolsheviks and which had turned out to have no foundation whatever in fact. He had lost his best friend, the property had been damaged, if not irreparably, at least to the extent of three-quarters of a million dollars, its stock had become reduced to less than a third of its former value, there were no longer any miners, and no coal was being mined. All because of a too-hasty telegram. He should have gone out there and seen for himself what conditions were.

On the other hand, any misunderstanding between his mother and himself had vanished. Never had she been so tender with him as when he had put her and Ditty aboard the Pine Tree State Limited the evening after Shiras's funeral, and she had pressed him close to her and kissed his hair and his forehead, thankful that the bullet that had grazed him had not pierced his brain. "John!" she had whispered, "my dear, dear boy!" And then, her hands on his temples, she had held back his head from her and looked into his eyes, as she had

done when he was a little boy. "Be brave, John!" she had said. "Just as your father was!"

It looked now as if the tie-up would be prolonged indefinitely. Civil war in West Virginia had been succeeded by industrial chaos. The "march" had continued to Bitumen, where it had been addressed ineffectually both by the governor and at the latter's request by Jim Halloran also, who with his tongue in his cheek had called upon the marchers to disperse and go to their homes. The Kawanda had been crossed and the miners, reinforced by a couple of thousand men from Boone, had attacked McCallum's deputies and the State police who had posted themselves on the ridge bordering Pango County to the north. The "battle" took place on a line twenty-five miles long and an immense amount of ammunition had been burned up. Three men had been shot and several wantonly murdered, but most of the firing had been ineffectual and probably intended to be so. After a couple of days Federal troops had arrived upon the scene and the demonstration had ended. The crazy performance had been a pitiful failure, the only result of which had been to bring odium upon the cause and lose the men their jobs. It had not even accomplished the intended result of advertising the struggle being waged by the miners, for the seaboard newspapers had given it little attention. Yet in its wake lay death and destruction, the hopes of both capital and labor ruined, like the still smoking wreckage of the power-house at Graham.

Now the men were "filtering back." Warren had wired asking whether they should be permitted to occupy their houses; and John had not replied to the telegram. How could he tell Warren what to do? The power-house would have to be rebuilt before work could be resumed.

Only three out of eight tipples were left. There was no money in the treasury. There would have to be a bond issue or something. Could he as a partner in Graham & Co. recommend such a loan to their list of investing clients? Would any of those clients be crazy enough to lend their money for such a purpose so long as he was president of the company or the union was in control? His associates at the office had shown consideration by avoiding the slightest reference to the subject. Indeed they consulted him as little as possible. He did not blame them. He knew that he had made a fool of himself; but he knew also that the trouble was deeper than that.

Something had gone out of him. Something had destroyed the acquisitive instinct in him, without which he could not properly take the lead in Graham & Co. Mungo and Ezra, he knew, would have regarded him as a milksop. His father? Well, his father had had a touch—but only the lightest touch—of the disease of which he, the son, was a victim. He would never take the place in the world occupied by any of them. His picture would never hang there on the wall between those of the former two. Moreover he perceived that, strangely enough, he did not want it there.

Yet, on the other hand, his experiences had only strengthened his belief in the private ownership of property. Capital was essential to progress. The desire to better his condition on the part of the worker—on the part of anybody—was a necessary economic stimulus. He recalled the inspiration he had derived from seeing the well-dressed, eager crowds in the subway when he had first gone down-town to business. Everybody should be struggling for “something better” all the time. Content meant decay or at best stultification. And this was as

true of material things as of spiritual things. The body was, to be sure, only the temporary house of the soul, but if the soul was to have a house it had to be built and kept in repair. So far as the material world—things—had any significance at all—you had to have a *modus vivendi*, and the best yet, so far as could be observed, was the system whereby, up to a certain point anyhow, each human being could enrich his material existence. For one couldn't enrich one's individual existence without at the same time enriching that of almost everybody else.

Productive investment was possible only when there was a profit—a reproduction of the original capital consumed with a surplus. This surplus or “profit” was in reality a profit for everybody, militating for their good. There seemed to be a prejudice on the part of some people against anybody making a profit! Why? Everybody had to make a profit or go under. Capital had to be productively invested or else it quickly ceased to be capital and disappeared. Would anybody be the better off because an enterprise failed? The prejudice against “profit” could not be economic, it must be social, founded in envy.

The advantage of permitting the accumulation of wealth was that it enabled great economic expenditure of a productive sort, not otherwise possible, done under the motive of individual profit. The trouble with private ownership was not so much the system as the wrong ones in it, who were wrong because they did not see that man could not live by bread alone, and that the laws dealing with money were not adequate to deal with men. There were other laws in employment just as important as the law of supply and demand—“laws of humanity”—just as there were more parties in interest in every

industry than just the employer on the one side and the employed upon the other.

It wasn't merely a question of whether A could get B to work in his coal mine for him at so many dollars per day. There was much more to it than that. Indeed there was a fundamental question of whether the owner of a natural resource had a right to say whether it should be operated or not. He remembered how his father had compared the human race to ants on a log being carried down-stream they did not know whither. It occurred to him that perhaps a better simile would have been a boatload of people cast ashore on a desert island. There would be no questions of ownership raised there—no individual claims "by right of discovery." The whole place would be exploited and developed for the use of all of them alike. Suppose one man should claim the only banana-tree on the place and say "Yes—you shall have no bananas to-day"? He did not see why in principle the total number of banana-trees made any difference.

Carrying the illustration only a little further, he saw that the inhabitants of the globe, the members of a nation, the people who were dependent upon an industry or even merely affected by it, also had certain rights which arose out of the simple fact that they were all in the same boat, so to speak. For none of them—any more than his shipwrecked travellers—could be independent of the rest. Those people of his on the island were not going to subserve their common purpose—to wit, subsistence until rescue—by a fierce struggle among themselves for the "survival of the fittest." Not by a jugful! There would have to be co-operation toward their ultimate end. Antagonism would mean death. The moment any one member of the party fell sick, became



weak, had an accident, or was attacked by natives, they were all at a disadvantage, perhaps in danger. In the same way the members of society as a whole were endangered by war, disease, poverty, or dissension. A great industry could not render adequate service if it was run without consideration of the public interest. The community was more important than the individual; the public right greater than the individual right.

What was the cause of all this jealousy and fear between the two more obvious parties in industry, the employer and the employed? In large measure ignorance of the facts. How overcome this? One way surely was by improving the points of contact between the workman and his employer, not only by applying the "laws of humanity," but by letting the worker see that they were being applied. Get the right sort of men on the job as superintendents and foremen. To the worker the foreman *was* the corporation. You could introduce all the profit-sharing and welfare schemes in the world and they would amount to nothing if your foreman called the men under him by vile names.

The workers had the same right to unite for the purpose of furthering their common interests and achieving justice as those who put their money into an enterprise had to unite as shareholders in a corporation. Like the institution of private property, it was not the union that was wrong but the wrong ones in it. The good miner needed the union to fight the bad operator, just as the good operator had to defend himself against the bad union agitator, even to the point of being the first to draw his gun.

The great trouble was the distrust that the worker felt for the corporation that employed him. Could he be blamed for imagining all sorts of things—profits that

were not made, injustices that did not exist, evil motives that were never thought of, a cold brutality in management that was the reverse of the truth? The common law was based on our experience of how human beings acted and reacted. When we created a new form of entity we produced something that did not act humanly. The old personal responsibility of the owner for the welfare of his men had been absolutely destroyed.

There should be an attempt to bring about a return to something like the old conditions. Seventy-five per cent of the Mid-West Coal Company's stock was owned in New York City and Philadelphia; ninety-eight per cent was owned outside the State of West Virginia! Could you be a banker in New York and run a coal mine in the mountains of West Virginia? Would the troubles at the Mid-West have occurred if he or his father, during his lifetime, had managed their mines themselves? He would be ready to sacrifice his dividends at any time to help his men to a better life. But could mere money do that? It was not his money that his men working out there in the darkness of the mines needed, it was *himself*.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

### FREEZE-OUT

THE stock of the Mid-West Coal Company continued to go lower and lower. Having reached nineteen—a loss of forty-eight points—it stuck there a few days and then slowly ascended to twenty-five on heavy sales.

John was going over Shiras's investments with Mr. Pepperill in the board room one morning when Mr. Wagoner was announced.

"Of course you know Wagoner's been a heavy buyer of Mid-West on the present market?" the lawyer warned John, who had never met the coal man. "I suppose he's come to ask for representation on the board of directors."

It developed that he had, and more. Mr. Wagoner was a heavy man of sixty-five or thereabout, vaguely suggesting the cartoons of the late Marcus Hanna. He looked as if he played golf, his small blue eyes seemed to see in and about everything, and he lost no time whatever in coming to the point. Placing his straw hat upside down on the table he nodded to Pepperill, sank into a chair, and clapping his palms on the griffins' heads decorating the arms, smiled engagingly at John and said:

"Mr. Graham, I've come to take your Mid-West stock off your hands, if you care to sell."

John was completely taken aback. He had always regarded the Mid-West as in effect the private property of the Graham family in which no one else could possibly have any interest.

"The idea is quite new to me, Mr. Wagoner," he

answered, recalling Wallace Garvey's allusion to the manner in which his visitor had opportunely secured a thousand much needed "empties" the preceding winter.

"Well, I may as well tell you at the start," said Mr. Wagoner genially, "that I've got a controlling interest in the company already. Mr. Graham sold out his holdings to me several weeks ago. If I'd only waited! However, I guess it was worth all I paid for it. I'll give you thirty. How do you say?"

"You say you have control?"

"I have fifty-seven thousand shares. Of course if you don't wish to sell we'll be glad to have you with us, only I thought that if you were not going to have any say in the management you might prefer to be out of it entirely."

As John did not reply he went on:

"The property, apart from what has been destroyed and will have to be replaced, is in an A1 condition. The bonded indebtedness is practically nothing. The coal is clean, easily got at, and on a direct route to tide-water. I think it has been operated extravagantly, however, and that the wage-scale has been excessively high. Too much money has been spent in window dressings, which always makes the men discontented. They don't like to see money that could go to them in wages put into movie-houses and newfangled do-dads. They don't see why a hospital has to equal the Ritz. Ten thousand a year on a Y. M. C. A. is ridiculous! And you have been making no money on your store! A coal mine isn't an eleemosynary institution. Besides, I have an idea that if some new drifts should be driven on the Indian Branch property at Stinking Water and the Bitumen Fuel Company's at Eagle Creek they could be made to pay very well."

"But they have nothing to do with the Mid-West Coal Company," said John.

"Oh, I've bought them, too," smiled Mr. Wagoner. "I am going to put them in at cost. That will give us continuous ownership all the way down to Bitumen. Once the union is driven off the Indian Branch——"

"Driven off!" exclaimed John.

"Certainly!" answered Mr. Wagoner. "This ridiculous 'march' on Pango was the last thing needed to put the union in wrong in West Virginia. I'm not sure the blowing up of the Mid-West power-plant wasn't the best thing that could have happened. It's put the kibosh on the U. M. W. for some time to come. Anyhow it was a good thing for *me*. Without it I never could have bought Mid-West at an average of twenty-three and seven-eighths. I tell you right now, Mr. Graham, that the union is going to be driven not only off Indian Branch, but out of Bitumen County, if I have to hire the whole United States Army;—which I won't, because twenty active young cops will do the trick. I shall wire Warren—with your permission"—he bowed—"to take nobody back who does not sign the form of contract used by the Pocahontas Operators' Association agreeing not to join any union, and tell him, in the event of refusal, to evict all such persons with their families from company houses without notice——"

"You mean you are going to introduce the 'yellow dog' contract?"

"I believe the miners call it that," said Mr. Wagoner good-naturedly. "It's absolutely fair. The company, on its side, agrees"—he winked at Mr. Pepperill—"not to employ any union men. What's the use of trying to blind ourselves to the situation, Mr. Graham? The U. M. W. doesn't care two shakes of a lamb's tail for



anything about the miner except to get his dues and his enrolment. They don't want the miner; they want control of the mines. They are going to compel the public to support two hundred thousand more miners than are necessary, simply because they belong to the union, and they are going to lift the price of coal up to a point where the high-cost mines will run all the year round. The people won't tolerate it and the U. M. W. is beginning to realize it. And now is the chance to make a drive at 'em—when public sentiment is with us."

John had got up during Mr. Wagoner's remarks and gone to the open window—the same window at which Thornton Graham had been standing a few weeks before when his heart had failed. John's almost failed him now, from another cause. As his father had done upon that day, John could look far down the sail-flecked Narrows to the open ocean. There was a tang in the air. The blue goblet of the sky dripped sunlight upon the tall white buildings. A fresh breeze whirled the smoke dancing from the chimneys; flags tugged at their masts. The world was vibrant with life and color.

As he stood there with the cool wind blowing against his cheeks he saw the ashen face of his dead father on the red background of the rug behind him. What had his father died for? A man like that could not have lived for naught. Surely he must have played some part, if ever so slight, in human progress! We might not have equalled the ancient Greeks in the beauty of our art, but were not our helots better off than theirs?

His father's face dissolved into the sunlight and in its place he saw that of Erasmus Dominick. Ah, surely the world was better off than in the time of Archimedes and Æsculapius!

John took a deep breath. How invigorating the air!

How joy-giving the sunlight! How beautiful God had made the world! And then like spots upon the glory of the sun he saw the black mouths of the drifts along the hillsides, heard the roar and crash of the tipples, and saw the crouched forms of the miners working in the darkness of mile-long tunnels. The sunlight became tarnished with coal-dust; the beauty dimmed. He saw the black and sweaty faces of millions of marching men—of every race and color—and in strange and outlandish garb—marching onward, struggling onward, stumbling blindly onward, altogether—"on to Pango"—to anywhere—to something that perhaps was better.

He turned round. Mr. Wagoner was offering Mr. Pepperill a cigar from a pigskin case lettered in gold.

"May I ask who your directors are to be?" inquired John.

Mr. Wagoner paused, match in hand. He was a kindly man.

"Oh, about the same as now—"Tex' McLane, Krass, Mr. Levi Graham—yourself if you want to be."

"Maitland?"

"I think not."

John walked back to the directors' table.

"Thank you for your offer, Mr. Wagoner—but I can't accept it. I'm told one of the best things for any management is an active and persistent minority interest. I confess I'd had other plans—crazy ones, you'd think, perhaps—I guess I'm elected for that. You mustn't mind if I'm occasionally a thorn in your side—a rather annoying one?"

Wagoner held out a thick, soft hand.

"My dear boy—I'm delighted. You couldn't annoy me to save your life!" He laid the hand on John's

shoulder. "Your father and I always got on all right—and I guess you and I will. I've got a heart myself—although you might not know it. What you have to learn is not to let your heart run away with your head! Well, good day!—So-long Pepperill!"

A curious smile wreathed John's mouth as he once more faced his legal adviser; but not enough to modify the determined lines of the Graham chin.

"And now to come back to these twenty-odd millions of your great-uncle Shiras. Of course the government is going to take nearly half. There's no way of circumventing that. However, once having paid the New York State tax and the Federal tax we won't have to pay any others, which is a blessing. You know most States of the Union impose a tax on the transfer of the stock of a decedent in any corporation organized under its laws, whether that decedent was a resident of it or not, and irrespective of whether or not the decedent's estate has already paid an inheritance tax on the same stock in the State of his actual residence. It's pure robbery. Why, if we stood for that sort of thing, there'd be nothing left for anybody to inherit!"

"*'If we stood for it'?*—Don't we *have* to stand for it?"

Mr. Pepperill's face assumed an expression of gratified vanity.

"Well, that is one of the ways we lawyers justify our existence!" he smiled. "I invented a way to avoid all that hugger-muggery and there won't be a cent of double taxation to pay on any of your father's or your great-uncle's estates!"

"Really!"

"Not a cent! I have all my clients carry whatever stock they own in corporations of other States in 'street' names. One gets a power of attorney for purposes of

transfer, of course, and attaches it to the certificate. If the real owner dies all that is necessary is for the executor to have the stock transferred out of the dummy's name to his own or anyone else's. The dummy isn't dead, you see, and there isn't any tax to pay."

He glanced brightly at John.

"H'm! So I see!" remarked the youthful financier thus being initiated into the mysteries of the law. "But"—he added, "I should think by the same means one might avoid paying *any* inheritance taxes at all. If Great-uncle Shiras's securities are all in the name of John Smith why couldn't we transfer them all out of the name of Smith and into mine, for example, without saying anything about it or paying any inheritance tax to the State of New York?"

Mr. Pepperill seemed as much shocked as politeness permitted.

"That would hardly be honest!" he said shortly. "But at any rate, as I was saying, we shall not have to pay any double taxation in other States. We shall escape being held up that way! Even so, the estate will be cut nearly in two. But still, you'll have another fifteen millions or so to look after. Your brother Thornton is hardly old enough yet to be given full control of his six millions, and of course your sister Perdita is under legal age. You will have to be appointed the guardian of her property, and you already have charge of your sister Agnes's affairs!"

"I only wish he had made a will!" growled the inheritor of six millions, "instead of dumping his responsibilities on a lot of innocent people! We were always kind to Great-uncle Shiras—always most considerate. But I don't think he has been altogether so. Of course I don't mean to have you infer that we were nice to him

simply so that he would not leave his money to us, but——”

“Oh, no!” protested Mr. Pepperill in haste. “I do not think it likely that any one would accuse you for a moment of that!”

John hid a smile behind the smoke of a freshly lighted Dromedary. Mr. Pepperill handed him several formidable looking schedules.

“Now if you will kindly sign each of those—on that line. And these, as well. There is no need of transferring any of the securities. In that way, if any of you should die unexpectedly, the tax could likewise be avoided. Let me see! There were one or two other little things— Yes, about that offer of yours of one hundred thousand dollars to Calizona University to establish a Chair of Industrial Relations—the trustees have written that they can’t accept it!”

“Don’t want a hundred thousand dollars? Calizona can’t be a college; it must be a lunatic asylum!”

Mr. Pepperill laughed decorously.

“They say that while they could easily find a use for the money, it would be unwise to take it for anything connected with politics, economics, or sociology, since the incumbent would be suspected of being the creature of capitalism. In a word it would be charged that the Graham millions were being used to influence the opinions of the youth of the country.

“One other matter—and a much more important one. I am advised by the chairman of the Committee on Internal Affairs that there isn’t a chance in the world of Congress granting a charter to the proposed Graham National Medical and Scientific Foundation. In spite of the offer of fifty millions in your father’s will, the committee have expressed the opinion that the perpetu-



ation of any such enormous fund in anybody's hands is undesirable. It would be giving somebody too much power. And of course there were one or two on the committee who were violently opposed to it on the ground that, in effect, it would be a trust fund for the advancement of capitalism as well as a public condonation of the way the money was obtained in the first place—all perfect 'bull' and bunk for the congressmen's home consumption, of course, but there you are!"

John screwed the lighted end of his cigarette in the ash-tray.

"Do you know of any way that I can get rid of my money without being accused of crime?" he inquired.

John signed the schedules, shook hands with the attorney, and went down-stairs to his office, pondering the paradoxes of legal ethics. Apparently it was regarded as morally excusable to dodge a tax imposed by a State other than that of your residence, but not of your own. Why? Of course to do so in your own State would require an act of perjury, not technically necessary in another jurisdiction under the circumstances. Was that it? Or was it merely that pressed beyond a certain point money would fight for life?

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### THE ZERO HOUR

#### § I

JOHN had invited Degoutet and Winty to stay with him at Forty-seven, and they made a practice of dining every evening there together. This afforded him the opportunity of discussing at length not only the plans of the Institute, of which Emerson was now the head, but his own immediate problems. He heard now for the first time the story of his great-uncle Shiras's abortive attempt to donate fifty million dollars for the study of rejuvenation, cancer, and arterio-sclerosis.

"What made it so hard for me," explained Winty, as the three of them, coatless, sat smoking around the dining-room table under the big crystal chandelier, "was the fact that the poor old boy was really too far gone to understand why I had to refuse his gift."

"I want to take the will for the deed," said John. "The six millions that will come to me from Uncle Shiras's estate I am going to give to the Institute for general purposes, and call it, 'The Shiras Graham Fund for Scientific Research.' You can spend a few thousands on rejuvenation, Winty, just out of sentiment. I shall commission Raoul to do a bust of the old man to be put in some appropriate place in the building."

"Yes—in the reception-room, where he made us the offer," agreed Winty.

"Ah! but he had a grand head!" said Degoutet. "In fact your whole bloomin' family have 'em. But permit

me to say that that particular piece of work is not going to be done on commission. 'Shiras Graham by his friend Degoutet' shall be a gift from the sculptor."

John reached over and patted the back of Degoutet's hairy hand.

"Thanks, Raoul! You did care for him!"

"He was the noblest Roman of you all!" answered Degoutet. "He had something big about him! He may not have been your idea of a mediæval saint, but he had strength and courage. He wasn't afraid of anybody or anything. He had faults, but he had virtues too! Virtues the world needs!"

"Yes," added Winty. "He belonged to a bygone era when the country needed men like him to build it up. The world has developed since then. Life has become more civilized. But he stayed as he was."

Degoutet filled their glasses.

"Here's to him!"

He put down his glass with a gruff laugh.

"Do you remember his asking me that night how I'd like to have a million dollars? I've learned something. I wouldn't take a million dollars now, by God! if I had to take a coal mine along with it! No, sir. 'Give me liberty or give me death!'"

He got up.

"Speaking of liberty, freedom—that sort of thing—I've thought of something I'm going to do sometime—something big! It came to me that day out in Bitumen John talked to the committee with 'Big Ed.' Did you ever see such muscles, such a back—strong enough to hold up the world? God, but I'd like to get him to stand as a model for me!"

He inhaled a lungful of tobacco smoke, and took a quick turn in front of the window.

"This is the great idea: a group of miners entombed in a tunnel—'Big Ed' as the central figure supporting with his arms the sagging roof timbers—while those on either side work furiously with their picks for freedom! And all about 'em—above and below—is the coal—coal—coal—that is smothering 'em! Get it? The blindness of the struggle—a struggle in darkness—without sense of direction? They don't know where they're going—whether toward freedom or deeper into the tunnel! All they know is that they must get out—somehow!—I thought of it that morning when I watched those miners marching over the hill at sunrise on their way to Pango. They didn't know where they were going! And they didn't care a damn! They just wanted to get away—to escape—to breathe!"

"What will you call it?"

"The Struggle for Freedom," answered the sculptor.

"A good idea, Raoul," said John. "But why not put me in there, too? What I see in your projected group is not Labor like Atlas supporting the earth, not the miner doing the world's work in danger and darkness, not the serf ground down by the power of either capital or labor, not men struggling for freedom under fallen walls of coal, but souls crushed under the weight of materialism—America suffocating under the overwhelming mass of material wealth that it is itself creating."

A taxi outside the window tooted derisively.

"High-brow stuff!" yawned Degoutet. "Well, me for the slats! Au 'voir, mes braves!"

"Funny chap for Erasmus Dominick to have liked!" commented John after he had gone out.

Winty rubbed his chin.

"I don't think so," he replied. "Each was, in a way, the complement of the other. Each marvelled at the

other. Raoul thought Dominick the most valuable man in the world. Perhaps—probably—he was. But Dominick saw that life was worth nothing without beauty. And he thought the Degoutets were the most valuable men in the world."

"Raoul's bust of my father is more to me than millions," said John.

"Of course it is—and its economic value as a spiritual inspiration cannot be measured. What a difference between your father and his uncles!"

"Yes, greater than that between 1870 and 1920!"

The same thought came to each of them. Would there be the same difference between 1920 and 1970?

"I must go over to the Institute," said Emerson, "to look at my chicken's heart. You know that blooming old bird has gone right on growing in its bottle of serum for twelve years!"

## § 2

The night was murky. Even the clack of hoofs and the grunting of the motors from the Avenue were muffled by the humid air. The gas crept along the oily street surfaces and through the windows, almost choking him. John wondered if the exhalations of a mechanical civilization might not gradually poison the human race!

He felt tired and lonely. Very small—like a little boy. Now that the leaves had been taken out of the table and most of the chairs shoved aside, the room seemed gigantic. The light from the half-illuminated chandelier was dimmed in the towering mahogany wainscoting. The empty picture-frames were great oval eyes looking down at him.

The room would never be the same without his father



at the head of the table. He could never take his father's place there or elsewhere. He had his father's determination, but he had not his force. The paralyzing influence of doubt had weakened his effectiveness. Even his father, "able" man that he was, had not accomplished what Great-uncle Shiras had accomplished. One had to be ruthless. Nature was ruthless; progress was ruthless. The way to reduce the cost of steel billets was to buy human lives as cheap as you could and feed them into the furnaces as you would any other material.

Some one was ringing the front door-bell rather persistently. Mrs. Brady had gone out and, thinking that it might be a telegram from his mother, John went to the door himself. He did not at first recognize the two men standing there. It was only after they had stepped into the hall under the lamp that he identified Wallace Garvey's unctuous smile and Jake Gideon's toothless grin. They made him think of two carrion crows sitting on a gallows-tree. Gideon was the first to speak.

"Good evening, Mr. Graham! Sorry to hear about your uncle's death! Too bad! Too bad! A grand old man he was! It's nice to see you looking so well!"

The air they had let in with them from the street seemed fetid and stifling. There was something as ominous in the loquacity of the one as in the smirking silence of the other.

"What do you want?" he stammered.

"A little matter of business."

"I want no business with either of you."

"Now, Mr. Graham!" protested Gideon, blinking.

"We have something important to say to you—highly important to you! Something—er—confidential."

He looked stealthily about the hall.

"Could we speak to you in private?" He seemed to

undulate into the dining-room, drawing John along with him. Garvey closed the door.

"May we sit down? Mr. Graham, let's be friendly. I like you and I like your family. In fact I've done you all many a service, only we'll forget all that. Mr. Garvey is ready to forgive and forget—ain't you, Wallace?"

Garvey bowed, a cynical smile on his lips.

"Mr. Graham no doubt realizes now that he acted hastily and under a misapprehension so far as our relations were concerned," he said generously.

"We can all of us afford to let bygones be bygones," soothed Gideon. "The world revolves, don't it? Sometimes we're up and sometimes we're down——"

"What do you *want*?" interrupted John. "Why don't you come out with it?"

"There, there!" croaked Gideon. "There's not the slightest use in getting excited, Mr. Graham, or being anyways irritable. I have only the friendliest feelings—the very friendliest feelings—toward you, I may say. So has Mr. Garvey. Of course——"

"What do you want?" cried John.

Garvey took out his case and lit a cigarette. He had never, it may be recalled, been invited by the Grahams to share their hospitality.

"We have come into the possession of some extremely important and confidential information."

"Highly confidential!" nodded Garvey.

"Your younger brother, Mr. Thornton Graham, recently acted as host, on a trip to New York, to a young lady *under eighteen years of age!*"

The two crows cocked their heads at him. Under the gallows-tree swung the corpse of family honor.

"If the District Attorney of New York County ever got wind of anything like that," declared Gideon, "noth-

ing could prevent an indictment. He'd have to take action or run the chance of removal by the governor." He whistled through his yellow teeth. "Think of it. Rape in the second—that's what it would be! A state's prison sentence for sure. No judge would dare not to send him up. It would smell too much of corruption."

"This is one of those cases where it wouldn't be necessary to do anything except let the facts be known. The public and the press would do the rest," said Garvey, allowing the smoke of his cigarette to trickle about his nose.

Gideon leaned across the table and tapped John's hand.

"But—! So far the public ain't on to it! By great luck nobody as yet has breathed a word. And if you act promptly and judiciously it is within your power to keep them from doing so!"

The gibbet of defamation creaked in the wind of blackmail.

"*The Vortex* has the story, Mr. Graham, and a very pretty one it is! It cost money to get it, too, a lot of it! It will be the biggest scoop in a generation. Picture the sensation! While the most prominent man in New York as foreman of a special grand jury is conducting an investigation for the purpose of driving vice out of the city, his younger brother—who, I may add parenthetically, has had a rather odoriferous career at Harvard College—lures an innocent and beautiful young girl to the city and takes her to a cheap hotel where he has previously engaged a room under the name of Mr. and Mrs. Brown. In the early morning hours the couple are thrown out and he takes her where? Where? Where? but *here!*" Gideon held up his yellow claws in horror at the bare thought.

Garvey chuckled. The gallows-tree creaked heavily.

"*The Vortex* has the story all set up in to-morrow morning's issue—a front-page scoop—with cuts—and a couple of pages more of Graham family history, description of the Adirondack Camp, account of how the Bevins were employed as caretakers, the secret visits of the younger Graham by aeroplane when the family were not there, and so on, et cetera, and so forth. The young lady and her grandfather have done quite a lot of talking—quite a lot," he grinned abominably. "Well, now, *The Vortex* is for sale—at a price. That price includes the affidavits of all the witnesses and a practical guarantee that not even a whisper will ever be known. That price," he added briskly, "is five hundred thousand dollars."

"A mere nothing when you have just inherited five or ten more millions!" said Garvey.

"Your word is enough. Agree to our terms and *The Vortex*—it's set up both ways—comes out with the usual kind of front-page stuff. We can arrange the details to-morrow. Refuse—and the story will be on every news-stand by 2 A. M."

He drew a folded sheet from his pocket and handed it across the table to John, who opened it automatically—then let it fall to the floor. It was too foul to hold. They had got him. The mere accusation would be enough to ruin them all. Nobody was interested in denials of guilt or proofs of innocence. Lucie would tell the truth, of course, but the world would accept only such portions of her story as tallied with its previously conceived opinion of the case. Besides, in the present instance the facts upon their face were not easily susceptible of explanation. Her testimony, while it would

exculpate Thorny upon the precise issue, would nevertheless create such an atmosphere of suspicion that his guilt would be a natural inference. As a celebrated member of the judiciary had once said, persons who went to an hotel under such circumstances could hardly be presumed to have gone there to say their prayers. Moreover, even if Thorny's story were to be accepted at its face value, his defense would drag in Ranny. Somebody had engaged a room for "Mr. and Mrs. Brown" and any proof that Thorny had not done so would necessarily involve proof that Ranny had. It might even be inferred that both were guilty.

The demand was not excessive from the point of view of fair-minded blackmailers. They might have asked any sum with an equal chance of getting it. There was "reason in all things," even among the murderers of reputations.

"You say," he heard himself repeating in a muted voice, "that *The Vortex* has been printed in two editions—one with—and one without—this story?"

"Yes! Exactly!"

"And that if I do not agree to pay you this money the story will appear in the morning edition?"

"As sure as the sun rises."

Gideon's voice had become a hiss; there was a triumphant leer in Garvey's eye.

"Then," said John in tones that he did not recognize as his, "let it come out!"

In the ensuing silence the thumping of John's heart seemed to fill the room.

"Come! Come! I guess you don't mean that!" said Gideon. Garvey's look of triumph faded to malice.

John got up.

"Get out!" he ordered. "Get out of the house!"



Gideon arose slowly to his feet.

"Listen here, Mr. Graham—" he began.

"I'll not listen to another word!" cried John. "Go ahead and print anything you choose. You are a pair of blackmailers. Get out or I'll call in the man on post and have you thrown out."

John stepped in the direction of the window.

"Tut—tut! Don't excite yourself, Mr. Graham!"

Gideon seemed to exhale sulphur.

"You are crazy, Mr. Graham!" protested Garvey. "If you let this chance go, it means the ruin of your family."

John turned upon him.

"Shall I call the man on post?" he asked. "It may mean a year or two in jail, Garvey."

A look passed between the two.

"We must give Mr. Graham time to think this over," said Gideon, moving toward the door of the dining-room. "We don't go to press until after twelve o'clock. It's only nine now. We'll go over to the office. There's three full hours before we lock the forms. He can have that for a *locus penitentiæ*. If we don't hear from him by that time—the story goes. Come along, Garvey."

John followed them to the front door and watched them go out. Honor did not permit of his yielding to blackmail, no matter what the consequences. "Millions for defense but not a cent for tribute." He would go down in the pit and stay there, but he would at least be true to his father. Let the dirty dogs do their damndest!

### § 3

He stood staring at the closed door. Was it possible that a mere false innuendo could blast overnight the

reputation of a century? If so, what was that reputation worth! "The House of Graham!" The "back-bone of the country"—a back-bone broken as easily as a dropped wine-glass! Surely the fact that his family had used their millions for the benefit of mankind would count in their favor, should prevent any snap judgment upon the public's part, until the truth should be established! But he knew that it would not! Had not Dominick fallen by a shot from a squirrel rifle fired in ambush? An honored name, the greatest of all possessions, was as ephemeral as life—presented as bare a breast to the assassin's knife. There would be no mercy shown them. Whatever of virtue the Grahams might have possessed would be called hypocrisy; their benefactions—bribes and blood money; their philanthropies—insults and patronage! It would be all gone at once. A crash—nothing left! Like a village blown to bits by a single shell.

The truth leered at him out of the débris of his house. Could this be his house, this empty, soundless place, with its bare mahogany wainscotings and staircases? Less than five months before it had been full of life. He looked through the drawing-room to the open door of the "Den" and could almost see his father's heavy shoulders bending over the model of the *Diana* while Degoutet worked upon his bust. And was not that Great-uncle Shiras sitting in there under "The Miser"?—Now they were all going into dinner and his father was carving the turkey and passing the slices around on the end of the carving-knife. There was his mother at the end of the table and "Bish" and "Queen Elizabeth" and "Mary Queen of Scots" moving round it. And there was Ditty flying down-stairs into nunkie's arms—"Come on, flapper! We'll go paint up the

town!" Weren't they there? Was he dreaming it?

The fog was drifting in off the avenue and obscuring his vision. He felt through the air and caught at the newel-post of the banisters. He rubbed his eyes and looked around again. No, nothing was changed—and yet everything was changed! The world had "gone bloeey." It was bad enough to find that you were unfit for your job; bad enough to have your proffered gifts regarded with suspicion or snatched out of your hands or turned down flat; bad enough to discover that you knew so little that your first effort toward reform and humanity in industry had precipitated a storm of violence; bad enough to lose your best friend and the girl who was dearer to you than anything else in the world—but now they wanted to reach up and drag you down into the gutter—roll you and your family in the muck! It was a bit thick!

That was no way to treat a fellow! If that was what happened when you tried to do your part, then mankind could go to hell. He was through with it—through with the whole business. The world could build its own hospitals, its own colleges, its own laboratories. No more philanthropy, no more art, no more humanity in industry! Paddle their own canoe, they could! And he'd paddle his! Go to Africa and hunt elephants or something. Pepperill could run the show—administer his hundred millions—or spend it—or throw it away—any damn thing!

The stairs were acting queerly, and he sat down. A fluid perspiration bathed his forehead and he wiped it away, wondering why the electric lights had grown so dim. There was no use getting into a funk. The ship was going down, but he could still man the life-boats,

and when she did the nose dive John Graham must be standing on the bridge. But must the ship go down? True, the periscope had broken the surface and he could see the wake of the discharged torpedo as it raced toward him, but—wasn't there some way to deflect it? Did one have to wait calmly until the moment came to be blown to atoms? It was incredible that two such abominable ruffians could deliberately walk into your house and announce that unless you handed over half a million dollars by twelve o'clock midnight you and your family would be suffocated by poison gas. Yet that was the situation. There *must* be some way of preventing the perpetration of such a dastardly crime. Surely the courts would grant an injunction against the publication of such a malicious defamation of character. Hartwell! Of course!

It was eleven o'clock before he heard Hartwell's voice at the other end of the wire. The District Attorney said that he had a taxi waiting at the door and would come right down. Fifteen minutes later he was sitting where Gideon had sat opposite John at the dining-room table.

"I won't pay those two hyenas a cent!" declared John as he concluded his narration. "My family can stand the gaff of adverse public opinion until the truth can be shown. But if this attack is going to be made I don't propose to wait on the defensive. I want to have you arrest Gideon and Garvey on a charge of blackmail and I want, if I can, to get an injunction forbidding the publication of the libel."

John's voice faltered at the expression upon Hartwell's face.

"Well, what is it?" he asked. "Don't baby me!"

"I'm sorry," answered the District Attorney. "An injunction won't lie for a newspaper libel. You can see

how if that were not so no newspaper could ever be issued. Gideon's a dangerous chap. He's had one foot in Sing Sing for years. Garvey I don't know. But they undoubtedly have the very best legal advice obtainable."

"Do you mean that there is no legal way to prevent this libel being published in their paper? Isn't libel a crime? Can't the courts prevent a crime if they know that one is going to be committed?"

"Libel is a crime, but is what they purpose to print a libel?"

John handed Hartwell the front page of *The Vortex*.

"Is there anything there that isn't so?" asked Hartwell.

John blazed at him.

"It isn't what they say, it's what they imply! Taking the story as a whole it's equivalent to a criminal charge."

"But," persisted Hartwell, spreading out the paper, "I can't help what it's 'the equivalent' of. Truth is, of course, no defense to libel if the matter is not published with an honest purpose and for justifiable ends. But a newspaper is justified in printing whatever is 'news.' Now, is this news? You bet!

"It comes very close to privilege. You are a public officer charged with the duty of prosecuting to indictment all persons who have committed the crime with which inferentially *The Vortex* charges your brother. You have not done so. If these alleged facts are brought to my official attention by publication in to-morrow's *Vortex* it will be my duty to demand that the Grand Jury investigate and, if the evidence warrants, indict."

"Is it—as bad as that?"

"Can't you read?"

John pressed his fists to his temples. He had not



taken the suggestion made by Gideon seriously, but as a mere additional threat.

"I don't know what your brother has been up to," continued Hartwell. "No doubt, the whole thing is susceptible of explanation. But—it would take a lot of explaining to a jury. Why, man! Some civic body might even ask for your own indictment for neglect of official duty in not prosecuting your brother. That is what you face if this is published."

"It's not for myself—" began John.

"Let's leave that for a minute. It's news—of the first water. They have a perfect right to print it. *But* they have no right to demand a price for its suppression. You can cause their arrest on a charge of blackmail, but can you prove it? And if you failed wouldn't there be a bigger stink than if you'd kept your mouth shut?"

"They came here and offered not to print the story if I would give them half a million."

"Did anybody see them here?"

"See them?—*I* saw them!"

"I mean anybody else?"

John shook his head.

"I was here alone."

"You should have Brophy listening under the window outside and, at the proper moment, vault in and slip the bracelets on 'em. That's what would have happened in the movies. As it is, they will either deny that they ever came here or say you telephoned them to come and tried to bribe them not to expose your brother and—that they refused!"

"What can I do?"

"That is what many another rich man has asked under similar circumstances," answered Hartwell. "I can't tell you. It depends on what kind of a fellow you are."

—This talk, you understand, is wholly unofficial. We haven't had it, so to speak.—Well, Graham, they've got you! It's as bad a mess as I've ever heard of. No lawyer ever advises a client to pay blackmail;—but blackmail is often paid. This thing if published is going to destroy the public confidence in all men of means. Of course people are going to believe it. Oh, yes—*cer*-tainly they are. Hereafter—for a while at least—they'll think every rich man, no matter who, is a whore-master. They won't know whom to trust. It's going to destroy the influence of wealth in this community, together with that of some of our best institutions, the Graham Foundation, the National Institute—yes, Graham & Co.! Worst of all, it may result in the indictment of your brother and if I prosecute him I'll do so to the limit—jail him if I can. Unofficially I shan't blame you much if you decide that discretion is the better part of valor.”

He spoke deliberately, almost solemnly, choosing his words.

“Well?” he asked as he took out his cigarette case, “‘Under which king, Bezonian?’”

Hartwell had watched many a convicted man receive his death sentence; he had seen more than one go to the chair; but for years afterward he used to say on certain occasions:

“Oh, you can talk all you want about nerve—the ‘zero hour’ and all that stuff! But, believe me, it's nothing to what I saw once. A fellow worth millions and millions of dollars—I can't mention his name—had to choose between paying blackmail and facing almost certain disgrace for himself and his family—I mean the kind of disgrace that people laugh about forever—the worst sort. Well, never tell me that money weakens a

man! This chap I'm speaking of had everything in the world—everything to live for, but, by God, he just shot his jaw and told 'em to go to hell! Yes, he took it standing! No—I can't tell you his name. Sorry. I'd like to. I *love* that man! It made a big impression on me—and I'm tough! May even have helped me to run straight sometime when I've been caught in a jam. Oh, yes, I've been tempted. That scene comes back to me often. And say, what do you suppose it is I remember most?—How blue his eyes were!”

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### TOWARD MORNING

THE State in its mercy furnishes to the wretch about to be hanged the best dinner it can provide: but although John's mental experiences were no less harrowing than those of the victim of impending "justice" he had not even that poor consolation.

Surely those days spent on the warm grass under the elms of the Harvard Yard or sitting with his pipe in the cushioned window of Holworthy 12 had been the happiest that he had ever known. Yet what had he gone there for? To smoke, to dream? No, he had gone there to fit himself for something—to prepare himself to join the great army of youth whose divisions marched forward each year, colors flying, music playing, to replace the worn, battered, and decimated battalions at the front of life's battle line. Thrown away, were they? Or were the trenches of decency, and honor, and unselfishness being pressed forward across No Man's Land ever so little?

How could he—at one spot in that tremendous sector reaching from creation to eternity—answer that question? Only the Great General knew. All any one could do was to have faith that the campaign had been wisely planned and stand ready to give his life when the order came, loyally and gaily, if he could, for the Great Cause. Well, the order had come. It had come to him by name: He could hear it.

"Captain John Graham!"

"Here, sir!"

"You will proceed to advance as far as possible toward the enemy's lines, take up a position, and hold it until further orders—unaccompanied."

John drew himself up sharply.

"That's a fine order to give a man!" he muttered.

Life's battle-line—a threadbare simile, but nevertheless an apt one; and nothing was worth living for that wasn't worth dying for! To-morrow the Grahams would have taken their places among the rest of America's discredited millionaires, alongside the McLanes. They all came to it sooner or later. Nobody loved a Graham, anyway. No matter what they did with their money or their lives the good rich would always be the objects of envy, hatred, and malice. They would never get any real credit. Why? The answer was easy. They did not deserve any. They never really gave away anything. That was the whole point in Christ's injunction to "sell what thou hast." The rich never gave their lives. They always stayed comfortably at G. H. Q.—never in the trenches. Standing under the mansard of 47 Park Avenue, New York City, U. S. A., John experienced again all the bitter contempt he had felt as an infantry captain in the freezing Argonne trenches for the snug motor-driven staff officers in the rear.

There were "*ambusquées*" in every war—in every sort of a fight;—fellows who never happened to be around when the real scrap was on, who never saw the thug pounding the brains out of the old man in order to get his watch—and who passed by on the other side. But he didn't belong to that bunch, thank God! The Grahams weren't that sort. Once more he heard his father's voice as he had heard it that day in the board room three months before: "I did my bit! Now, Jacko, do yours!"



The onyx clock on the mantel folded its hands in midnight prayer. It struck, in a jangly wheeze—the Westminster Chimes—"Ting—tung—tang—tong!" He had heard them last that night at Graham when he had stood at the hospital window and watched the white flashes as the tipples went up on the other side of "No Man's Land." "Ting—tung—tang—tong! O Lord our God!"

He went to the window and looked westward across the roofs on the other side of the avenue. Above the housetops the sky reflected an amber sheen—the elusive glow he had so often watched over the German lines during a bombardment from massed artillery. No less a front! No less a battle-ground than at Graham! Two hours more and the attack would begin! It was too late to surrender even had he wanted to. But he did not want to. In the end—no matter what people thought in the meantime—the truth would prevail.

The stream of motors was still scurrying by, the red tail-lamps chasing one another toward the jewelled tower of the Grand Central Station. He walked through Thirty-seventh Street to Broadway, into a translucent golden world. North and south flashed scintillating mosaics of white, yellow, claret, emerald, half dimmed by their own winking radiance. Here a liquid arrow hurled itself flaming across the zenith to pierce a blazing target; there a fountain of fire poured cascades of gold-dust down terraces of dazzling flowers; upon the house-tops a Gargantuan kitten coaxed a spool of fire with incandescent paw.

He turned up-town, jostled by the crowds. About him rose the impatient tooting of taxis, the clang of car bells, the clack and scuffle of myriads of feet. A careless throng of smug, protected, overfed people tired from

enjoyment, who wanted something "with a kick in it" and now sought the perfumed bedlam of the restaurants to dance till morning to the grunt of the clarinet and the whimper of the "baby sax"—polite, elegant people—sons, daughters, wives, husbands, and fathers—all moving along together to somewhere they knew not where—clutching at happiness as they went—to the blare and wail of the jazz—up the street—across the avenue—on to love and laughter and forgetfulness—on—on—on to anywhere other than there—to something different—to the next thing, whatever it was, but to nothing better!

As John elbowed his way among them he was filled with sadness, not because they were bad, but because they were indifferent. For just above them, so that their feet almost touched the heads of the laughing throng below, he saw marching in the opposite direction another column of stolid, stoop-shouldered men in greasy mine clothes, their hollow faces black with coal and flecked with powder—smelling of garlic, sweat, and whiskey—slouching along with pick and shovel—ignorant men—terrible men—hopeless men—who had lost the love of sunlight—! His men!

. . . . .

He must be on hand to read his death sentence. Standing in front of the open windows of *The Vortex* press-room he watched the cylinders working swiftly forward and back, yanking the long white ribbon of paper off the drums. Each time he knew that they implanted indelibly upon the white surface of the paper a false and malicious libel against his brother, crushing reputation and truth together; a libel it would be useless to deny and for which there could be neither recompense nor revenge. There was one particular press he felt

certain was printing the first sheet—the one with his picture upon it. He watched it with fascination—rolling forward and back, forward and back, forward and back. Each time it seemed to be rolling over his dead soul.

By half-past one the square was deserted. Whence had that careless multitude vanished? Save for a few taxi drivers and policemen there was hardly anybody to be seen. From every roof and façade blazed the assertion of man's superiority in collars and neckties, in motor-cars and tires, in cigarettes, in spool cotton, in chewing-gum. There they all were, hard at it!—the man who knew a good cigarette when he saw one, the little wiggly fire imps doing their daily dozen, the Dutch mother beating her wayward Hans, the petticoat fluttering in the rain—all winking, flashing, deluging the empty night with a coruscating brilliance never before seen on sea or land. It was like the sun and the stars looking down at creation upon a manless world; the same sun and stars which, when the human race had perished from the face of the earth, would still be looking down in exactly the same way. Had they seen any improvement? Was the last man any better than the first? What had his father, with all his vast wealth and vaster power, accomplished for the race?

As he stood there alone in the centre of the square the red arrow spurted across the roofs for the last time and vanished into space, leaving a black hole in the illuminated ramparts; the wriggling imps stopped their uncompleted gymnastics and disappeared; a sudden fading of the golden luminosity occurred; the delighted face of "Pop" with his giant cigarette darkened into a ghostly obscurity; the kitten scampered away for the night; glory departed from Broadway.

This gradual shutting off of all the lights left him with a distressing sense of his own futility. Standing there he experienced a loneliness far beyond anything he had ever known before.

*The Vortex* would be off the presses and in the hands of the newsboys in a few minutes. He crossed the tracks and once more made his way to the ramshackle building that housed its offices. The presses had come to a standstill and men were tying the half-damp sheets into huge bundles ready for the delivery wagons. He looked about for somebody to buy a copy from.

He hated to enter the accursed place, but there was apparently no other way to secure a paper, and he mounted the iron stairs that led to the open vestibule. On one side were the presses; on the other the composing-room; directly in front of him, an elevator. It came bumping down at that moment, bringing a flood of light along with it, and in the midst of the light—Rhoda.

She was pale, weary-looking, but self-possessed—as if conscious of her right to be there—never more utterly beguiling. He stood there face to face with her, blocking her exit, incapable of utterance. Rhoda a party to this blackmail scheme! Then he saw such tenderness in her eyes that suspicion vanished. He knew then that of all his possessions his love for her was the most precious of all. He did not care what she believed, or did, or was doing there. He wanted her—only her. His sole thought was that he had found her again—found her at last! He seized both her hands in a tight grip.

“Rhoda!” he said. “I’m so glad to see you again!” He saw that her eyes were swimming with tears, and took her in his arms. He forgot all about the elevator man or *The Vortex*. Now that she was his again he felt that he could stand against the world. The joy of hav-

ing her with him! There was so much to say, so much to hear! They descended the steps and walked toward Broadway—quite naturally and without constraint. She was the first to speak.

"What are you doing over here, John?"

"I came to get a copy of *The Vortex*. There is a story in it about—my family."

"No there isn't!" she answered. "*The Vortex* has not printed anything about you, John."

"Not printed anything? Why not?"

"Because Gideon doesn't own the paper any longer."

She looked away from him.

"Gideon—not—own—*The Vortex*! Who does own it?"

"I do!" She shot it out defiantly. "John! Don't think me a coward—or silly—or anything. But don't you see—I simply couldn't let them do that to you!"

"You—*bought—The Vortex*!" he stammered.

"Yes, I bought *The Vortex*!"

He was too bewildered to grasp the situation.

"What on earth are you going to do with it?" he inquired rather lamely.

"Make a decent paper of it, I hope!"

"Rhoda, how *could* you let yourself be blackmailed that way! Did they tell you I'd refused to buy it?"

"They didn't have to. They were working us both at the same time, and I knew you wouldn't, John."

"Well, I'm—flabbergasted!" he declared indignantly.

They had reached the "island" in the middle of the square. There was no one in sight except the policeman on post between the car tracks.

"Let's sit here a moment," said Rhoda, stopping at a bench.

He sank down beside her and leaned his elbows on his



knees with his chin on his hands. Unconsciously he echoed Degoutet's antique phrase.

"It's appalling!" he muttered. "To think that you—! I can't understand it! Give those swine half a million——"

"I didn't! I only gave them a hundred thousand!"

"It was pure blackmail!"

"I can't help it! I may be weak and I may be a coward; but I was fighting to protect your honor, John! And Ranny was involved, too, you see. That's all there is to it—I'd do it again."

"I'm utterly dumfounded!" he insisted, beginning nevertheless to experience an extraordinary relief.

"New York needs a decent, fairly conservative socialist paper," she went on in a conversational tone. "One that isn't afraid to be honest. Please don't be so solemn about it, John. It's not your funeral—although it came near being. I'm—I'm terribly happy, you know! Even if you aren't!"

"Rhoda!" he slid his arm along the back of the bench. "You know I am."

The policeman who had been eyeing them suspiciously took a few steps in their direction—as if to say: "Come, come now! This isn't the time or place for this sort of thing."

"He's going to tell us to 'move on.'" whispered Rhoda.

"Let's!" said John.

They sauntered up Broadway toward Columbus Circle, where, as further down, the high noon of midnight had faded to the afterglow of morning. He was so tired that his head seemed to be floating in the air above his body, which moved along automatically below. They entered the park, walked past the silent sheepfold,

crossed the drive through the damp shadows leading to the empty mall with its interminable rows of yellow globes, and took shelter in the wistaria arbor beside the casino. It was pitch dark in there except where the lamplight dappled the rough stems of the big vines. He could not see her face, but he did not need to. At length he asked her:

"Why did you cut me, Rhoda? And what were you doing with Halloran that day?"

He felt her shiver. Could it be the morning breeze that was just stirring the leaves about them?

"I was afraid to recognize you, John, for fear Halloran would suspect me of being a company spy and just pretending to be on the side of the union. You see, he thought I was a great asset and tried to make me think I was a sort of Joan of Arc. When he really felt sure of me he threw off all pretense himself, and made no effort to conceal his methods and how he played on the ignorance and prejudices of the men. He even joked about cashing for himself the relief checks issued to men who had already left the tent colonies. Even then I didn't realize how far he was willing to go. I didn't know that he was planning arson and murder. I had begun to hate him, but I stayed because I thought I might be of help.

"When you telegraphed out the order to make no arrests he went nearly wild with glee. He began drinking, too. Said we must go up to Graham, take command of the field in person. We stayed at his cousin's, the wife of a pit-boss. I think he imagined he had some power over me—or hold of some sort. Anyhow, he took advantage of the situation to make love to me in a sort of way. I had to overlook it, you see, for the sake of the men and everything. I wanted to find out what he was going to do. If it was violence, I was going

to try to warn you. Even then I didn't suppose he'd plan murder. Yet he had. He sent those men to the tippie to shoot old 'Papa' Joy. And when they didn't fire quick enough for him he stood up—he no longer cared what I thought—and yelled to them to 'kill the scabs.' It was terrible. You see, I was afraid they were going to kill *you!*"

She buried her face on his shoulder and kept it there.

"Poor little Rhoda!" he said.

"Then came the firing and when I saw you fall I jumped out of the car and ran to where you were. Did you know I was there? The doctor said you were only scratched. I didn't know what to do. I couldn't go back to Halloran and I didn't want to have him think that I'd betrayed him—which he would have done if I'd gone to you at the hospital. So I got a motor and ran away."

"The brute!" he exclaimed, grinding his teeth.

"That's the trouble out there," she said earnestly.

"It isn't the union, it's the bad men who are in it!"

It was chilly even with their arms around one another.

"Let's walk," he suggested.

"I've so much to confess!" she accused herself as they neared the reservoir. "I was so unjust to you! So utterly intolerant! And, worst of all, so uninformed! Quite hateful! To begin with, none of the things Schirmer said about the Mid-West were true. It is as nearly perfect a property as can be, although, Heaven knows, conditions are bad enough in plenty of other places right on the Indian Branch!"

"Well, however that may be, the Mid-West is not a Graham property any longer," he informed her. "Wagoner's bought control of it!"

"Wagoner!"

"Yes, rather bad, isn't it! I'm afraid he'll squeeze the men as hard as he can. He intimated that my father's policy was too liberal."

"Oh, John!"

"He tried to buy me out—offered me a fairly good price under all the circumstances—but I refused. If he tries to make any drastic changes he'll find a fight on his hands! I may not have control, but I still own a big block of the stock and"—he smiled grimly in the darkness—"the Grahams still have some influence!"

She crossed his arm with hers——

"Dear John! Do you remember that afternoon after Schirmer's lecture how I said you didn't look like a Graham and you asked me what I thought a Graham looked like—and I said 'sinister'? You're not a bit sinister!" She reached up and laid her hand against his cheek. "You don't look sinister and you don't feel sinister!"

They were climbing now up the rise below the belvedere on the west side of the park. Overhead the parting clouds left starry pupils in the eyes of night.

"I've warned Wagoner," he continued. "I've told him I was going to constitute myself an active minority working for the best interests of the men. That's all I can do with the Mid-West now. I'd rather planned to give up banking and go out there to work—live right on the job, you know—but I can't if he controls it. That's what the owner of an industry that isn't too big ought to do. If it is too large, and I'm not sure the Mid-West isn't, of course he has to hire somebody to do it for him. That's the trouble. The bigger and more successful the corporation, the wider the distribution of stock and the less feeling of responsibility toward the men. I guess my job has got to be always fighting for humanity in-

side the economic system. And that I can do right here in Graham & Co. It's going to be slow work, but——"

He bent and kissed her very tenderly. "Who knows what the next John Graham will be like!" he whispered.

She pressed her lips to his shoulder.

"I don't know which side you're on, Rhoda, and I don't know that it matters. The main thing is we're both after the same thing."

They had reached the reservoir and were standing by the railing looking eastward across the blue-black water. The stars were paling in the widening cloud gaps. There was a faint suggestion of outline to the housetops, but where they stood the night was blacker than ever.

"The present system may seem cruel, but life is cruel. All we can do is to try and make it less so. It is as hard to escape from riches as it is from poverty—harder. I wish," he sighed, "I could chuck all my money in there and forget it for the rest of my life! Sometimes I feel as if I just couldn't go on!"

"You must! You've got to go on!"

She stopped suddenly and gave him a queer look.

"Doesn't it seem as if I'd said that very thing to you before—sometime?"

"You did!" he answered. "The first time I ever met you."

"I remember! That day on the cliff. When I was carrying 'Johnny the Dog' and you thought you couldn't climb any further."

"If it hadn't been for you, Rhoda, I'd be there yet. You made me go on."

"You've got to go on now, John! You can't go back!"

"Isn't that something new for you?"

"I see a lot of things differently from what I did."



You mustn't sink the ship, John; you can't even afford to rock the boat."

"And you don't blame me any longer for not selling everything I've got and giving it to the poor?"

For answer she lifted his hand and implanted a tiny kiss in the palm.

"I think you're doing the very best you can, dear,—the best that anybody could do!"

He put his arm around her again and she pressed against him.

The horizon was tinged with a translucent saffron. Where the breeze stroked the surface of the reservoir it showed clear blue. The rheumatic old watchman at the gate-house wondered what they could find to say at such an hour. In a bush behind them a bird chirped drowsily.

"You don't know how wretched I was without you, Rhoda!" he said.

"And I without you!"

The saffron glow was getting brighter. The searchlight of the dawn was playing upon the sky above the inky line of housetops. It was no longer dark.

His eyes were very blue as he looked down at her. They kissed.

Imperceptibly, day had come. Above the sky-line floated a great whorl of rose-colored cloud tinting the water at their feet. Faint shadows marked the grass, softly green in the half-light.

"There is one thing about that poor rich young man in the Bible you may have forgotten, John!"

"What is it?" he asked.

"That 'Christ, beholding the young man, loved him,'" she replied.







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